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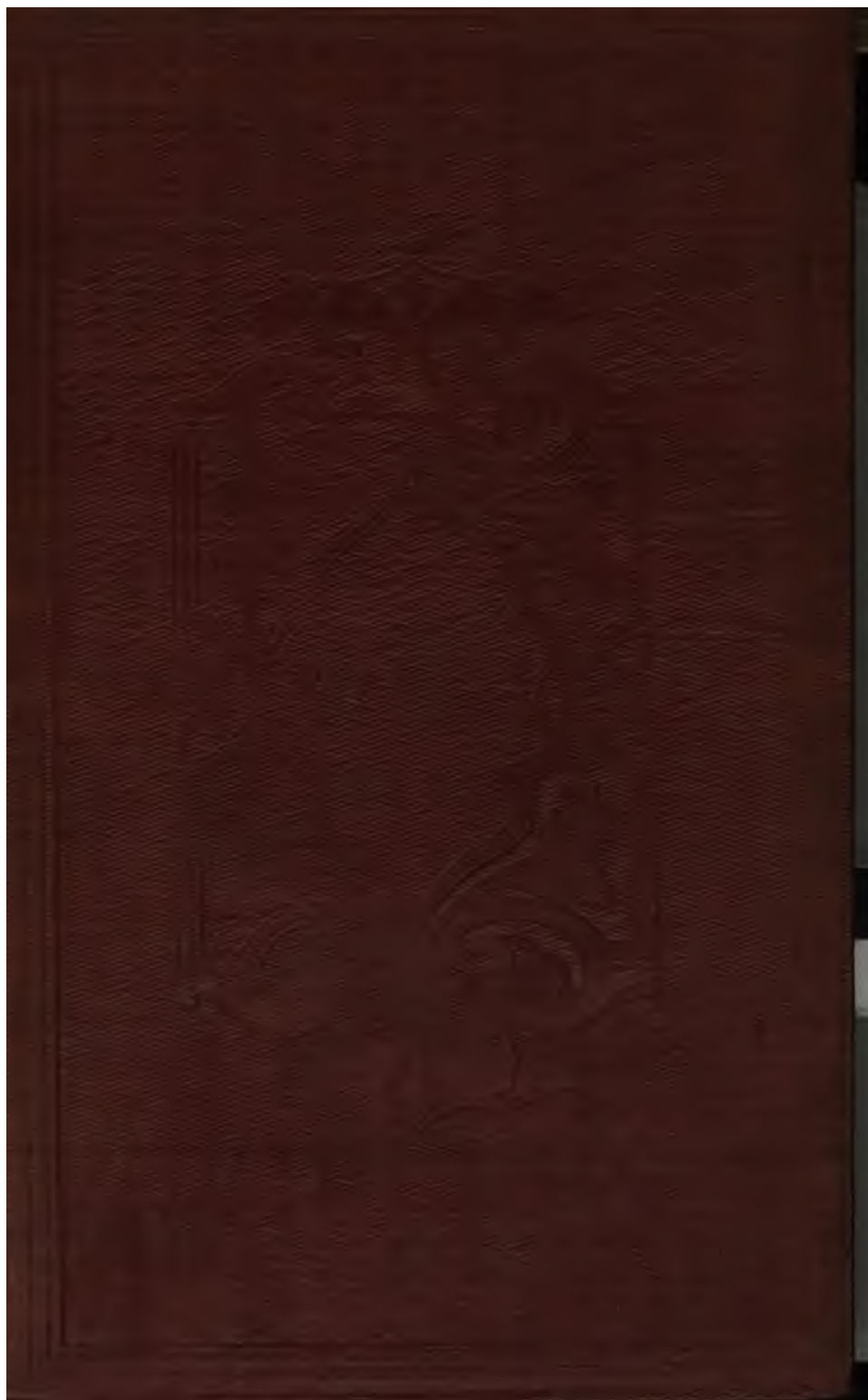
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HOME SKETCHES
AND
FOREIGN RECOLLECTIONS.

BY LADY CHATTERTON,
AUTHOR OF "RAMBLES IN THE SOUTH OF IRELAND,"
"A GOOD MATCH," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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HOME SKETCHES,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

Visit to Mont Mellerie, the Trappist establishment, near Cappoquin—Scenery of the Cove of Cork—Anecdotes of the peasantry—Advantages of confession.

Lismore, Thursday.—To-day we made an excursion to visit Mont Mellerie, the establishment of Trappist monks. The road to it from this place is along the left bank of the Blackwater, amid lovely scenery, as far as Cappoquin. There we left our comfortable carriage, and mounted a jaunting car, which proved as rough as any of our old friends that jolted us over the Kerry mountains in our last tour; but the violent shaking,

and the still more violent shower of rain we encountered on approaching the bleak range of Knockmeldown mountains, were amply compensated by our visit to the interesting convent. The first part of the road winds up the sides of a finely wooded glen ; a clear stream rushes along far below ; and the ruins of an old castle, which are situated on the summit of a precipitous rock on the other side, forms a beautiful object in the landscape. A turn in the road took us out of sight of the wood and glen, and brought more fully to view the mountainous and bleak region where the convent is placed, and which, till within a few years, was perfectly wild and uncultivated. Dark masses of clouds were blown along by the high wind, and cast deep shadows over the stern mountains ; but soon a single ray of brilliant sunshine crossed the middle distance, lighting up the white towers of the monastery, and defining their outline sharply against the purple mountains behind. The sketch I endeavoured to make of the scene is at the beginning of this volume.

The crops, enclosures, and planting of this extraordinary establishment are truly wonder-

ful, when we consider that seven years ago it was a wild mountain. Our wonder encreased when we approached the buildings. They are of great extent, and though not finished, are advancing rapidly towards completion.

We were told that the change of habits in the population of this mountain district, since the establishment of the Trappists, is very remarkable. It was a notoriously lawless neighbourhood, where outlaws and stolen sheep were sure to be found. Now nothing can be more peaceable.

The results of labour, judiciously applied, must also be of immense advantage, and the system of the establishment ensures this application. The works of each department are directed by clever men, who by study become informed of all the recent discoveries, and are enabled thus to give the best instruction.

We were very courteously received by the superior, who showed us all over the establishment. He has a most benevolent countenance, full of christian humility, yet quite devoid of


that cringing and servile expression I have sometimes remarked in Italian monks.

He first took us through the garden, where the only flowers they have yet cultivated were blooming over the few graves of the deceased brethren. The sun was shining upon them, and upon the painted glass window of the chapel near. I was struck with the idea that these poor men must enjoy a more firm conviction of future bliss than most people. Their own daily fare is hard, and apparently miserable. No luxury, no ornament of any kind, is visible in those parts of the building in which they dwell. The garden, too, only contains common vegetables for their use ; but the church is highly decorated. They expend all their money, all their ingenuity, in embellishing the temple of the God they serve ; and they cause flowers to bloom on the graves of those who are gone, as if to shew that real bliss can only be found in a hereafter.

There are about seventy monks in the establishment, all English and Irish. They were invited to return to France, but refused. Some

of them were men of rank and fortune; but once a brother, all distinction ceases. Their dress is a white cloth robe, over it a black cape, with long ends reaching before nearly to the feet, and a pointed hood of the same dark hue. The effect of these singularly attired and silent beings, in the carpenter's shop, where seven or eight were at work, was very striking; it seemed almost as if we were visiting another world and another race.

Strict silence towards each other is observed, and their mode of life is very severe. They rise at two o'clock every morning, both summer and winter, yet they do not partake of their first meal until eleven o'clock. They never eat meat or eggs, and have only two meals in the day. The second is at six, and we saw what was preparing for it—brown bread, stir-about and potatoes. The latter are boiled by steam, and a prayer is said by the monks just before they are turned out of the huge boiler, and carried in wooden bowls to the refectory. We also visited their dairy, where they make the best butter in the neighbourhood, by a peculiar method, in



which the hand is not used. The dormitory is fitted up with a number of wooden boxes on both sides. Each box is open at the top, and contains the small bed and a crucifix, and just room enough for the brother to dress, and perform his devotions.

The chapel is very large ; and the monks are now decorating the altar and seats with very rich carving. It is entirely done by themselves ; and we were told that some of the best carvers and gilders were rich men, who, of course, had never even tried to do anything of the kind till after they became monks. It is the same, too, with those who now dig the fields, and plant potatoes, and break stones, and make mortar ! With all this hard life of deprivation and labour, the monks appear happy and very healthy. When I saw a number of these brothers kneeling in the chapel before the cross, I thought of these lines—

“ To us a clearer light is given,
Beyond the cross to look to heaven ;

Yet, grateful for the boon we prize,
Shall we our brother's faith despise ?
No ; rather trust God's mercy still,
Though blind, the zeal hath blessed the will."

Friday. Carrigmahon.—I have been very ill for two months, but thank God I am now so much better that I can enjoy this cheerful place, and the charming views which it commands. It is situated on a considerable height, washed by a narrow branch of Cork harbour ; and from the spot where I am now sitting at my writing table, I look down on the deep blue sea ; boats of all descriptions are passing to and fro, and so near that every figure in them can be distinguished ; I see some walking up and down the deck, some sitting in groups talking. And then the view farther on, how lovely it is ! The calm and tranquil bay of Cove—the heights and lighthouse beyond ; and the whole bounded by the magnificent ocean, whose vivid colours are ever changing, ever producing a variety of impressions on the mind.

Then the near view, immediately opposite another window, is so homely and pretty, and affords such a pleasant contrast to the grand ocean scene; for here are fields and hedge-rows, cottages and villas, dotted about the heights. Though far above it, I am near enough to see the labourers working in the fields, the girls sowing potatoes, children playing before the cottages, and travellers winding along the road.

There are few things I delight in so much as a varied and interesting view from a comfortable room. I have not health or strength to enjoy scenery when travelling expressly in search of it; but it is a great pleasure to be able to sit here by a good fire, with books, music, and every comfort around, and look upon a stormy ocean, and see the ships approach, and watch their progress into the calm bay, and fancy a thousand things about each of them. Milnes says, "In the act of travelling we feel deeply the necessary affinity of beauty and repose: to enjoy a beautiful place, we ought to be resting in it as a home;—to enjoy a beautiful sight, we ought to look on it, not with the full

gaze of delighted surprise, but rather with half shut eyes, conscious of the bliss they possess, now letting it go, now calling it back, and playing with it, as a beloved child.

“How small a resistance of our material being, a quick motion, one paining nerve, a feeling of hunger, of cold, of heat, are sufficient to turn off the approaches of the spirit of beauty ; and even a sensation of too active pleasure, of too excited gladness, is all enough to keep it away.” This last feeling is beautifully expressed in the line—

“Perhaps ye are too happy to be glad,”

by, I believe, Keats, that unfortunate and most sensitive poet, who was the victim of a severe review.

Here, when darkness comes on, and the splendid view is no longer visible, I sit and gaze on the distant lighthouse. There are few objects which excite so many pleasant thoughts in my mind as the sight of a lighthouse, and it is perhaps the most pleasure-giving object we can look upon. How many weary mariners are

nightly cheered by the first glimpse they obtain of it. Some from far distant countries, who may not have seen any sign of land for weeks or months; and the fishermen, too, who have been toiling far out at sea, how gladly must they hail that light which is to guide them safe to their families and home.

Wednesday, 18th.—I am most happy here; such walks, and glens, steep woody heights, and smooth grassy slopes, where we climb up and down, with dear T—'s children. Sliding and rolling about in the sunshine—running and scrambling till we are tired, and then sitting down to rest in a sheltered nook, and enjoy, in such a scene, the luxury of fatigue.

This is a very enjoyable place: the old picturesque castle of Monkstown is within a quarter of an hour's walk, and the road to it commands a noble panoramic view of this celebrated harbour. The banks of the Carrigaline river, which flows into Cork harbour, not far from its mouth, are steep and well wooded. In its course

it forms a natural basin, called Drake's Hole, where that gallant captain, with his little English squadron, took refuge when pursued by the Spanish Armada. The enemy, ignorant of this retreat, looked into the harbour, and not seeing the English fleet, sailed away.

We have made several excursions to this interesting and lovely spot, both by water and land. There is a fine establishment of salt-water baths, close to the shore, at the bottom of our shrubbery, as good and comfortable as the best in Paris. All these advantages, with flowers, and books, and luxuries of all kinds around—kind dear friends, who love me, and those two darling children, the development of whose good and lovely minds it is delightful to watch,—all this ought, and indeed does make me very very happy.

Indeed it is so blissful, that I often feel it must be a beautiful dream; and sometimes I suddenly tremble lest I should awake and find in its place some painful and dull reality.

Perhaps the charm of all this is a dream; for all these same things to another person, or even

to myself at another moment, might, perhaps, inspire no joy. I have for some time experienced a great longing for quiet seclusion, and the undisturbed enjoyment of a pretty country; and here my desires are fully satisfied.

Seldom in this life do things happen exactly *as* we want them. We do sometimes obtain what we have ardently wished for, but often not till we have ceased to care much about it. Our fate is more in our own power than we generally suppose; and it is seldom that we do not obtain at some time or other that for which we have ardently wished and laboured. But how often do we grow weary in the pursuit, and a new object engages our anxiety and attention just as the one we had been long striving for is attained!

Many persons who have read my "Rambles in the South of Ireland," expressed much interest in the fate of a poor young woman whom I described as the "widowed bride."* They were

* See vol. ii. p. 115. Second Edition.

very anxious to know the fate of her husband, who had been convicted for stealing a pig, and sentenced to transportation, and for whose pardon she implored in such an eloquent manner. Unfortunately, the evidence against him was so strong, and his guilt so clear, that the authorities could not interfere ; and notwithstanding the sympathy which his beautiful bride excited, and the interest which was made, he was transported.

The poor young creature thus left, and without any means of support, made every exertion, though almost broken-hearted, to provide for herself and the child which was soon expected. I have continued to hear a most favourable account of her from M—— ; and to-day I received a letter, in which she says,


“ Your friend the ‘ widowed bride’ brought me a few days since such a very pretty letter she received from her husband—it was really impossible to read it without tears. I never read anything more touching—so artless, so full of poetry and delicacy, and breathing such ar-

dent love and regrets for the sufferings he had caused her. It was quite a model for a love-letter; and the poor thing carries it about in her bosom, though she cannot read it." M—— continues to say, "You would have been amused the other day at a trait of the *fear of man* in the Irish damsels. Kitty Galway was married about a fortnight since to a 'boy' from Kildimo. A few days after, when les bien-séances permitted her to make her appearance, she came to see us, to give an account of her future prospects—how the 'boy' had an acre of ground and four sheep and an elegant cabin, only it wasn't *thatched* (!) yet. 'And where is your ring, Kitty?' said I, observing that the fourth finger of her left hand was in its original state. 'Och! 'twas with a borrowed one we were married; he didn't give me the ring yet.' 'And why not? when he is so rich as you say, he ought to buy you one.' 'May be he will.' 'But you should ask him.' 'Is it ask him?' she exclaimed, looking down; 'do you think I could make so *bould* upon the man, an' I only a few days married to him!—'tis shy indeed I'd be to ask the likes of that *yet*, any way!'"

In our walk last night we met a poor woman who lives at some distance from this place. I had not seen her since our former visit to Ireland, and was much grieved to see the effect which this year of poverty has had upon her countenance. I expressed my fears that she must have been very ill since I last saw her, for the poor creature's cheeks were sunk and pale, and she seemed scarcely able to stand.

"Yes, dear lady," she said, "I have been very ill with the fever; indeed I have never had a day's health since my eyes were last blest with a sight o' yer honor's face. I've been sorely ill, but thank God! I'm all the better for it. Yes, all the better," she continued, on seeing that we looked astonished; "It's done my mind a power o' good; my heart is at peace now, and I feel ready to live or die—ready to suffer or be glad. Oh, I never felt so happy for many a long year as I did all through the sickness it pleased God to send upon me; blessed be his name!"

Strange!—here was a woman, solitary and a widow, one of the poorest of the poor, who had a long illness, a fever, in a wretched cabin; the



very idea of being ill in such a place fills one with horror, where she must have lain upon damp straw, exposed to want and misery,—and yet bearing all, not only with resignation but thankfulness! What a lesson this should be to us, who complain of our sufferings when we are ill, in the midst of comforts and luxuries.

There are a great many Quakers in this part of the country, and I am very glad of it, for they seem to diffuse a spirit of neatness and order in the neighbourhood wherever they abound. After passing several small but comfortable clean-looking houses and well-kept gardens, one is sure to see the plain grey bonnet or quaint shovel hat of one of the Society of Friends; they must be of great use in Ireland. I am only acquainted with a very few, but it seems to me that their features express in general much goodness, and that sort of prudence which makes people live under, rather than over their means, and that can alone enable them to be of great use to others. This sort of prudent unselfishness is very much wanted in Ireland. There is indeed plenty of spontaneous unselfish-

ness in the Irish character ; they will give away their last penny or potatoe, and be more glad to do so than even to satisfy their own starving hunger with it ; but very few would *save* even for the good of their children or dearest friends.

Yesterday, as W—— was leaving Cork, a priest came up to him, and gave him five pounds, saying it was restitution money which was given at the confessional, therefore the name of the party could not be divulged ; all he could say was, that it came from a tenant, who many years ago had been a defaulter. “ What a striking proof of the utility of confession,” thought W——, as he put the five pounds in his pocket!

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CHAPTER II.

Bianca Donati; a Tale of Florence, in the Thirteenth Century.

DURING a long illness I have had this winter, I amused myself by writing a little tale, which is founded on an event that occurred at Florence in the thirteenth century. It is related in all the histories of that period, and Rogers has immortalised it in his poem on Italy :

BIANCA DONATI.

CHAPTER I.


“ Era già l'ora che volge l' disío
A' naviganti, e' ntenerisce 'l cuore
Lo dì ch'han detto a' dolci amici, addio ;
E che lo nuovo peregrin d'amore
Punge, se ode squilla di lontano,
Che paja 'l giorno pianger che si muore.”

DANTE.

IN ancient times, one of the most splendid palaces in Florence was that of the noble Ghibelline family of Amidei; and on a lovely evening of April, in the year 1215, it was the scene of more than usual festivity and joy. Indeed, on that memorable day, the whole town wore an air of cheerful expectation. Knots of people were congregated in the streets and piazzas, whose countenances were expressive of a sort of holiday joyousness and peaceful good will, which in that age of civil discord and party spirit, it was most rare to witness.

The streets were decorated with tapestry, and the balconies of the wealthier citizens were hung with cloth of gold and damask silks of gorgeous hues, while the palaces of nobles vied with each other in the display of armorial bearings and rich standards, placed in those rings of brass, which may still be seen on the most ancient of the rugged and towerless, but magnificent remains of former splendour.

These signs of peace and concord, which pervaded the city, were the more extraordinary, as the fortifications of nearly all the dwellings, the



strong towers, portcullises, and high barricaded windows of the palaces, shewed that the streets of Florence were often the seat of warfare.

And such had been the case. Among the deadly feuds which have desolated the world, few were so bloody and violent as the contentions between the Guelfs and Ghibellines. But of late peace had been established in Florence ; and the chief cause of this blessing was a projected marriage between Rodrigo Buondelmonte, a Guelf noble of the vale of Upper Arno, and Elvira, the lovely heiress of the Ghibelline house of Amidei. On the morrow this marriage was to be celebrated ; and a large party of relations and friends of both the young people was now assembled in the spacious halls of the Amidei palace.


The beautiful cause of this unwonted peace and happiness alone appeared sad ; yet she was surrounded by all which could flatter the vanity and dazzle the fancy of a young girl about to be united to the handsomest and most powerful noble in Tuscany.

Early in the evening, and before all the

guests had arrived, Elvira complained of being ill and fatigued, and retired from the fête, after begging her aunt, the Countess Grandini, to receive the remainder of the visitors, and assist her father to do the honours of the banquet. Perhaps it was more the desire to spend the last evening before her marriage in solitude, than fatigue, which caused Elvira to leave the crowded halls and wander alone amid the orange groves of the palace garden.

The young betrothed proceeded slowly along flowery paths and woody dells, till she arrived at a broad terrace which commanded an extensive view over the valley of the Arno.

There was an air of languor and dejection in her attitude as she leant over the parapet. Her eyes rested on the blue distant hills, but they did not seem to imbibe the pleasure which such a view should produce. The sun was just sinking behind the heights of Fiesole when its last rays brought to view the stately towers of a castle whose dark walls, embedded in a grove of pines and magnificent clustered woods, had before been scarcely visible. As these well known



towers met Elvira's gaze, her beautiful eyes beamed with an expression of hope and joy. It was as if she had seen all her future life suddenly tinged with glowing colours. But the bright gleam which illumined the landscape soon passed away, the woods and towers became indistinct again, and the look of joy vanished from Elvira's countenance. Her eyes filled with tears, her head sank upon her arm, and the long tresses of golden hair nearly concealed her lovely face.

Footsteps traversed the garden ; but so deep was Elvira's reverie that she heard not the sound. A man approached, of noble mien and handsome countenance, attired in the flowing mantle and brilliant dress of the day. He was no longer young, yet his features wore an air of habitual and youthful happiness, which a life of benevolence and prosperity can alone impart. And now his dark eyes were radiant with a joy which seemed to shew that the dearest wish of his heart was accomplished. But when he reached the terrace walk, and saw the mournful attitude of Elvira, and the tears which glistened

on her cheek, his brow became clouded with an expression of anxiety and dread. He gazed at her in surprise, as if revolving in his mind what could be the cause of her grief.

“Elvira,” he at length said, in a kind and melodious voice; “what ails my child?”

She started, and throwing aside the tresses of her waving hair, hastily assumed an air of cheerful gaiety as she replied, “Nothing, dearest father.”

“Then why those tears, that ruffled brow, which strives to conceal the troubled thoughts within?—and when all Florence resounds with joy, why is my child, whose beauty is the cause of peace and tranquillity to so many thousands, why is my Elvira sad?”

“I am not sad, indeed; only I was thinking that— that—” here her ingenuous countenance shewed that she was ill accustomed to disguise; “but remember, dearest father, I am about to quit thee and my dear home, where I have known so much happiness.”

“Is that all, darling?—then do not grieve; see how near are the turrets of Buondelmonte’s

fortress ; we can see them from this terrace ; in one short hour I could be with thee. Listen," he continued, while his countenance beamed with delight. "Listen to those shouts of joy—ah ! how delightful to think that peace, that greatest of blessings, that solid and firm happiness which I have always laboured in vain to procure for my country, should be accomplished by thee, my darling, my adored child ! Ah ! blessed be those eyes which have melted the heart of the proudest Guelf in Tuscany ! Blessed be that voice which has touched and enchained him ! Come, cheer up, my child ; let not one cloud linger on thy brow, when all Tuscany is basking in the sunshine of peace. Remember, that of all the beauties of Italy, none are so admired, so envied, as the fortunate Elvira Amidei."

"I am, indeed, most blessed, dear father ; and ungrateful should I be if I were not to appreciate the full extent of my happiness, and return fervent thanks to God, who has allowed me to be the humble means of procuring peace for my country ; but, dear father," she con-

tinued, after a pause, as if anxious to justify still farther the tears she had shed; "but I am sorry to find the Donatis do not participate in the common joy. Hark! he is coming—the streets resound with his name! Buondelmonte will be here," she continued, in an agitated voice, while she endeavoured to smooth her ringlets of golden hair. Amidei was glad to see this proof of anxiety to appear well before her betrothed husband, and with a proud and satisfied look he gazed on his lovely child.

"He will not find us," said Amidei, after a few minutes pause; "that foolish sister of mine, whom you left to do the honors, will detain him. I will go and tell Buondelmonte you are here; you cannot object to see your betrothed."

"Stay, do not leave me alone, dearest father; I will return to the other guests."

"My child, art thou afraid to see thy lover alone?" he asked, with an anxious and distrustful air. "Wherefore this extreme agitation?—is it possible thy heart does not respond to his love?" he enquired, with a look of intense anxiety, which plainly shewed that his fate, the whole

happiness of his life, which was firmly interwoven with that of his country, hung upon her answer.

"Oh! do not look so anxious, dear father; be assured—"

"Nay, but I must have my child happy too; for deeply as I love Florence, I would rather see it a desert than that its prosperity should be purchased by the happiness of my child, by the tears of my darling Elvira."

"Be calm, dear father; do not, I beseech you, contemplate any such misfortune. Now I must reproach you for the cloud on your brow," she said, with a smile; "come, do not let Buondelmonte see you thus; look at me now—see how happy I appear. See, there he comes!"

"Yes, there is the gallant, the noble Rodrigo," said the Count Amidei; "but," continued he, in a low and anxious tone, "methinks his step is not so light as is its wont; some secret sorrow preys upon him also, perhaps some lover's quarrel," thought Amidei, who resolved to watch the demeanor of the young people.

"The Donatis have refused my invitation,"

said Buondelmonte, approaching them with an anxious and disappointed air. "'Tis strange, that when all Florence is rejoicing in the blessing of peace, they should continue their rancorous feelings."

"Yes," said Elvira, with a trembling voice; "and my poor friend Bianca is miserable. Her mother has refused to allow that she should be present at — at — the ceremony to-morrow, though she was taken from the convent yesterday, where we passed our childhood together. It is a great disappointment to dear Bianca."


"'Tis very strange," exclaimed Buondelmonte; "for when the factions were most at variance, Cosmo Donati was always my friend; and now, since the Ghibellines are at peace with us, he has become cold and distant, and tries to avoid me. But I will seek him; I will endeavour to persuade him to attend our marriage feast, and bring his sister. I know the old countess, his mother, is a proud and implacable woman; but still, on this occasion, she certainly ought to relent."

"I hope you will succeed," said Elvira.

"Bianca Donati was always my dearest friend, and I should be miserable if I thought we were to be so no longer :—but where is my father ?" continued Elvira, looking anxiously around.

During this conversation the Count Amidei had withdrawn to a little distance, wishing to allow the young people an opportunity to converse at liberty. When, however, Elvira perceived she was alone with her betrothed, for the first time in her life, her manner became absent and confused ; she continued, however, to talk on indifferent subjects. But Buondelmonte marked not her embarrassment ; he seemed absorbed by some painful feeling, and continued to pace up and down the terrace for a few minutes. At last he said, as if following the train of his own ideas, "I will go instantly, and seek Cosmo Donati."

Buondelmonte hastily approached, and then raised the trembling hand of Elvira to his lips, and was about to bid her a hurried farewell, when his attention was arrested by her unusual paleness, and the agitation of her whole appearance.



“What has happened, dearest Elvira?—speak, I beseech you—tell me if this marriage is in opposition to your wishes.”

“Oh no!” exclaimed the trembling girl.
“I—I—”

“Be candid, dear lady; let not any considerations for my happiness, or the peace of our country, induce you to sacrifice yourself. We were betrothed before we had seen each other.”

“And do you regret it?” enquired Elvira, with sudden anxiety.

Buondelmonte started. “Far otherwise!” he exclaimed, taking her hand. “All that I have seen of my Elvira makes me bless the hour when she consented to be mine. In addition to the happiness which this marriage will ensure to my country,” exclaimed the young man, while his handsome countenance beamed joy and benevolence, “in addition to this blissful conviction, I have obtained the most lovely and fascinating creature in all Florence for my bride. But you have not answered me,” he continued. “I wish to hear from your own


lips, now that we are alone, that this engagement is not repugnant to your feelings—that—”

“ Oh ! no ! How can you think so ? ” said Elvira, in a tone of tender reproach.

“ Then I am satisfied,” exclaimed Buondelmonte, imprinting a kiss on her brow ; “ I will now proceed to the Donati palace.”

Buondelmonte was joined by Count Amidei, who had witnessed from a distance the scene with much satisfaction, and Elvira was left alone.

It was evening ;—the short twilight of that southern clime had faded away ; but the sky was clear, and a young crescent moon shone with pure and mild lustre over the sleeping landscape. Soon a dazzling and more vivid light gleamed through the orange and cypress trees, for the Amidei palace was now brilliantly illuminated, and the peaceful repose of the scene without was interrupted by sounds of mirth and music from the festal halls. But the dance and song did not induce Elvira to return to the palace.



At the farther end of the garden was a little chapel, where a faint light glimmered through the stained glass window; thither Elvira bent her steps. She had not left the terrace long, when a figure, muffled in a large cloak, emerged with cautious and stealthy pace from a grove of tall pine trees, which bounded the garden on the side next the street. It passed on towards the chapel, keeping under the shade of the trees as much as possible, and traversing the open spaces with great velocity.

CHAPTER II.


“ La vita fugge, e non s’arresta un ora ;
E la morte vien dietro a gran giornate ;
E le cose presenti e le passate,
Mi danno guerra, e le future ancora.”

PETRARCA.

ELVIRA DEGLI AMIDEI was blessed with one of those sunny dispositions which seem formed to enjoy perfect bliss even in this world, and make others happy—one of those persons to whom all

duties are easy, and every occupation pleasant. Her innocent life had glided away in the delightful consciousness of loving and being loved. Even the oldest and most crabbed of the disappointed nuns in the convent where Elvira had been educated, felt her cheering power, and loved the gentle girl; and the most rough and unruly of the school-girls were often softened by her mild and refining influence. Every one justified to themselves the tenderness they felt towards her, by agreeing that she really was the best and most deserving girl in the whole convent.

Her father often came to visit her; and these were joyful holidays, for he seldom failed to bring some presents to distribute among his daughter's dear companions, and his arrival was always hailed as a sort of fête. One day he appeared more joyful than ever; yet there was a look of anxiety on his brow, and an agitation in his manner, which almost frightened Elvira. He came to inform his darling and only child that the young Count Rodrigo Buondelmonte had demanded her hand in marriage. Elvira



trembled when she heard the news, but it was more at the agitation of her father than from any apprehensions for herself.

She knew she was a rich heiress, and the representative of a noble and ancient family, and she had always been taught that it would be her fate and duty to marry the person her father should choose. The subject had indeed but seldom entered her head ; but when any of her older companions left the convent to be married, Elvira sometimes wondered what sort of person her future husband would be. With the happy confidence of her cheerful temper, she had then always felt sure that the father who loved her so well would, on this important subject, do what would most conduce to her welfare. She was therefore prepared to think of marriage without apprehension, and hoped to love and venerate the man who was to be her guide and partner through life.

Yet now, when the decisive moment was actually arrived, Elvira trembled ; and the night which preceded the important day when Buon-delmonte was to visit her, was a sleepless one.

“ I know he will be all that is good and noble,” thought the young girl, as she entered the reception-room. “ Yet I shall be very very sorry to leave this old convent, and the good nuns, and my beloved companions.”

But the first glance she obtained of the Count Buondelmonte fully reconciled her to her lot ; subsequent interviews confirmed this favourable impression, and soon Elvira loved her betrothed husband with all the affection of her gentle yet ardent spirit.

Thus far the course of Elvira’s love had run smooth. Her father’s affectionate pride and benevolent heart were at once gratified, and the whole country rejoiced at this projected marriage.

Elvira had abandoned herself to the inexpressible delight of finding innumerable perfections in the character of her intended husband. She had lived for many weeks in a state of the highest enjoyment which the purest of earthly beings is capable of feeling, when duty and affection go hand in hand, when the name, which in her petitions to God was the first to be breathed, was also the most beloved of her heart.

There were moments when she trembled lest this happiness was too great to last, and soon indeed was Elvira's bliss partially clouded. She learnt to doubt of the affection of her betrothed. This was not a suspicion hastily embraced, for Elvira's disposition was not jealous, and she had long combated an idea which was such a death-blow to her hopes, and tended to lower the high opinion she had entertained of her lover.

Gradually she became more convinced that even if he loved her, there was some secret sorrow which preyed upon his mind. She longed to enquire, yet dreaded to hear what might prove the destruction of her fond hopes. She had often longed to see him for an instant alone before the marriage day. Timid as she was, she thought it right to enquire if he still really loved her; but when the long wished-for moment arrived, when she found herself actually alone with him, as was described in the first chapter, all courage forsook her—she was unable to say a word. What was then her surprise when Buondelmonte put the very question to her which she intended to ask him. The few words which followed,

his praise of herself, the kindness of his manner, and the tender kiss he imprinted on her brow, induced her to hope that all was right. It is so delightful to believe what we wish ; and after a long period of doubt and fear, we are apt to cling to any certainty with eagerness.

Again was Elvira happy ; again she felt secure that she was loved ; but instead of returning to the gay throng within the palace, she went to return thanks to Heaven for the reassurance of her lover's affection. Elvira approached the little chapel with a firm and elastic step. The desponding fear which had for some time almost crushed her spirits was gone, and she now moved, thought, and felt with the confidence of the loved woman. To the right-minded, how great is the height to which the soul seems raised by the confidence of being loved by the person who is to be the ruler of its earthly destiny.

Elvira now felt of some importance in this world ; she was necessary to the happiness of one person, and that person—oh joyful thought !—was the beloved of her heart. And he had

thought, he had suspected, that she loved him not—that the marriage would be repugnant to her. Oh! there was something delightful in the idea; and that he should have been a prey to the doubts which had agitated her heart, convinced her more than anything else of the depth of his love. She rejoiced in the conviction that he had for an instant suffered, while her kind heart resolved that a whole life dedicated to forestall his slightest wish, should atone for the momentary pang which the agitation, or apparent coldness of her manner, had caused him.

Elvira knelt, and returned thanks to God before the altar in the little chapel. A single lamp, which was suspended over the picture of the holy Virgin, cast a strong light on Elvira's beautiful countenance, but illumined with a faint and glimmering ray the massive pillars and heavy arches of the ancient building. The small door by which Elvira had lately entered, was softly opened; the tall muffled figure, which was mentioned before, stooped under the low portal, and glided with cautious steps behind

one of the pillars. The stranger gazed at the kneeling figure of Elvira for a few moments; then, with a gesture of impatience, glanced at the pale moonbeams, which began to penetrate through the eastern window.

"Elvira," said a low voice. The bride started; when looking round, she beheld the stranger. She uttered a cry of horror, and turned deadly pale. The tall figure approached, and extended its arms towards the terrified girl.

"Cosmo Donati," said Elvira, drawing back, while she endeavoured to assume a composed air; "why do you thus rudely disturb my devotions?"

"Because you are about to give your hand—that hand for which I sued in vain—to another," said the stranger, in a stern voice, while the dark eyes flashed with anger beneath the hood which only partially concealed a handsome countenance. But gradually, as those eyes beheld the terror of Elvira, they assumed a milder expression; the ruby lips began to smile—with a merry laugh the cloak was thrown

aside, and Elvira was clasped in the arms of a beautiful woman.

“Bianca! my own dear Bianca; how could you terrify me so?” exclaimed Elvira, as she kissed the fair brow of her friend.

“To revenge your refusal of my brother; and by the bye, if I resemble him so much, and that you really love me as much as you profess, how happened it that you took such an aversion for him?”

“You do indeed resemble your brother,” exclaimed Elvira, still shuddering from the effects of her late terror. “But tell me, how could you contrive to enter the garden?—has your mother, then, allowed you to visit the abode of a Ghibelline?”

“Far otherwise, dearest Elvira; I came by stealth, to inform you of my perplexities, and to implore your assistance, if I should require it.”

“You surprise me; Bianca, the proud, the commanding, deigns to implore assistance of me!—what can have happened? You, whose imperious disposition contrived to make even the

nuns submit to your will? It cannot be—I see you are jesting; you look happy, proud, brilliant as ever. Nay, you have grown even more majestic, and more beautiful,” continued Elvira, gazing affectionately on her friend.

“Perhaps you are right. Yes, I am both happy and miserable,” said Bianca, musingly. “Since I sent that letter to you this morning, strange things have happened; but, in the first place, I must try to tell you what I could not trust to paper,” she continued, with a deep blush. “I am going to confess to you what I have not yet breathed to a human being.”

“What!—not even to father Francis? Ah, Bianca, do not make a frail creature like myself the depository of what you withhold from your spiritual guide, the good confessor, who was always so anxious for our eternal welfare. But what can it be, dearest Bianca? You are agitated, you make me tremble; I fervently hoped you would relinquish those mad pranks in which you were wont to indulge. Really, at your age—”

“Don’t preach, darling ; believe me, this is not a mad prank,” said Bianca, with a contemptuous smile at her own past follies. “I am no longer a child, and this is an event which decides the fate of my life. Oh ! Elvira, I am an altered creature since I last saw you ; something has happened which has softened my disposition—I resemble you more now, dearest ; I feel I could even now be almost as good as you—I could make any sacrifices ; but at the same time, if my only wish, the desire of my heart, is thwarted, if—if—” she continued, assuming a lofty air, while her dark eyes flashed fire ; “if!—” and she mused long and deeply ; “oh, then I shall die at last,” she said, starting at some frightful picture her imagination had conjured up.

“You terrify me, dear Bianca ; try to explain what has so altered you. Oh, let me hear your joyous laugh again ; I would rather see you thoughtless, and even wildly joyous as of yore, than a prey to such passionate feelings.”

“Well, I will try to tell you ; and yet I feel unwilling to clothe in language, in words which

are the medium of communion between common minds, those feelings on which I now secretly live, which form a very part of my being. Methinks these hallowed thoughts would be desecrated."

Elvira smiled ; she was struck more than ever by the change in her friend's whole appearance ; she felt that she loved her better, that there was now a new bond of sympathy between them, and she began to suspect that Bianca loved.

"I should like you to divine my thoughts," said Bianca, after a pause ; "answer me one question—do you love your future husband?"

Elvira started. She answered not, but the look of exulting, of unspeakable joy, which shone like a brilliant sunbeam on her beautiful countenance, was enough for the observing Bianca. "Then you can understand me," she said.

"Are you then betrothed?—have you seen the person who is destined to be your husband?"

"I have seen the only being who can ever claim that title," exclaimed Bianca, with anima-

tion; "I have seen the most perfect of mortals; but," she continued, with a desponding look, "but I know not even his name; still less whether he be a Guelf and a noble, such as my mother would select for my husband."

"Ah, dearest Bianca, how imprudent!—and your mother, is she aware of your love?"

"I saw him again since I came from the convent," continued Bianca, whose attention had been so absorbed by her own train of thought, that she had not heard Elvira. "I beheld him this very morning; he was mounted on a white charger, his dark——"

"Then you are sure your affection is returned?" said Elvira, with hope.

"Not a word passed, and yet I feel convinced that he loves me," replied Bianca.

"This without a word," thought Elvira, comparing the sanguine temper of her friend with her own late want of faith in the affection of a man who had sued for her hand: "but, dearest Bianca, are you right in remaining so late?—surely——"

"Ah! I forgot. I am so happy to think you

now understand my feelings. I forgot to implore your protection. I am terrified at I know not what; I cannot ascertain why I have been sent for from the convent. Strange preparations are going on in the palace; I thought it might be for my brother's marriage, but all is so mysterious, I can hear nothing—a vague yet horrible suspicion sometimes oppresses me, that I may be the person, that I——”

Bianca paused, and turned deadly pale; but soon resuming the proud air which was her most habitual expression, she said, “But I shall not consent; I would rather die a thousand deaths—I shall fly, I shall implore protection from you.”

“But would you disobey your mother?” said Elvira, in a solemn tone; “would you forget the holy precepts which we have learned?—would you incur the malediction of a parent, and disappoint all our dear instructors, and poor sister Agnes, who loves you so much?”

Bianca trembled, yet tried to smile, and said, “Do not anticipate such misfortunes—all may be my own fancy. I will at least not torment my-

self before the time; all I know is, that no power, no consideration, not even *your* entreaties could prevail, to make me alter my determination. Hark! what noise is that?—some one comes. Adieu—I will not run the risk of offending my mother by the discovery that I secretly visited a Ghibelline house. Adieu.”

Hastily throwing on her dark cloak, Bianca Donati glided away, and soon disappeared among the pine-trees which bounded the palace garden.

CHAPTER III.

" 'Twas in a narrow street,
North of that temple, where the truly great
Sleep, not unhonoured, not unvisited ;
That temple, sacred to the Holy Cross—
There is the house, that house of the Donat—
Towerless, and left long since ; but to the last
Braving all assault. All rugged, all embossed
Below, and still distinguished by the rings
Of brass, that held in war and festival time
Their family standards.

ROGERS.

were extinguished in Florence, except a lamp which glimmered in the highest tower of the proud Donati's Palace; and a long gallery looking upon the inner court of that spacious dwelling was still illuminated. In this gallery twelve women were seated round a large table, busily employed in embroidery, and making different parts of a magnificent dress.

"I'll be bound," said one of the youngest, who was ornamenting a green velvet cap with diamonds and rubies, and whose sparkling eyes and animated countenance showed that she had suffered less from toil and the lateness of the hour than those of some of her companions, "I'll be bound that our young Lady Bianca's dress will far outshine that of the grand Amidei, as much as her dark eyes are more brilliant than——"

"Yet the Signora Elvira is a beautiful creature," interrupted an older but more gentle damsel; "and I doubt much whether our Lady Bianca will make so good a wife. There's no knowing what she will be after she is her own mistress; 'twas but this evening she played me

such a trick—Jesu Maria ! I tremble now when I think of it ; what would the lady countess say, if she ever found it out ?”

“ As for the matter of that, she takes after her mother,” said another, whose fingers seemed quite tired of stitching the seams of a rich brocaded petticoat ; “ who can ever tell what the countess would be at even now ? How mysterious, for instance, is this :—here are we kept out of our beds, working away at a dress which is to fit the signorina, and yet it can be only worn by a bride ; and then, where’s the husband ?—can you, can any one tell ?”

“ ’Tis indeed most strange,” said a fat sempstress, rubbing her drowsy eyes ; “ a bridal without a bridegroom—the whole house too prepared as if for a marriage, and the young lady herself in such an odd humour to be sure—but still she looked very happy this morning, when I saw her standing at the balcony.”

“ Well, that’s fortunate ; for I never thought such a wayward child would marry the person her proud mother would choose.”

“ There’s only one man in the wide world

our young lady would marry with pleasure," said the hitherto silent Marianna, the prettiest of the group, and Bianca's foster sister.

"Who is that?—who is the person she wishes to marry?" inquired several voices.

"Ah! I know all my young mistress's secrets. I have never been separated from her for a single day, you know."

"Do tell us," said the maker of the brilliant head-gear; "do tell us who the man is."

"That I cannot, for the Lady Bianca herself does not know his name; but if you will promise not to inform the countess, I will tell you all about it."

They promised the utmost secrecy, and Marianna began: "Last summer, when the countess sent for us from the convent to the old castle of Donatorre, one fine evening the Lady Bianca and myself went rambling about the hills, and—reach me that gold thread, this boddice will never be finished."

"Well, go on; what happened in the mountains?"

"You know," continued Marianna, with an

important air ; “ our young lady used to be full of fun and odd tricks, and so she must needs climb up to the top of a height beyond the boundary of the park ; and as I was trying to follow her, and entreating her all the while to come back, a great wild boar came tearing down from the forest. I screamed ; suddenly my lady disappeared, and the boar too. I felt sure she was killed, and almost fainted with horror. I was afraid to call out, lest that terrible animal should come and kill me also ; so I crept softly under some bushes. Soon I heard a rustling among the leaves, and I gave myself up for lost ; and falling on my knees, I covered my face with my hands, and prayed to the Holy Virgin for assistance. At last I heard my lady’s voice ; and looking up, I saw her carried down the steep precipices she had climbed up before, by a handsome knight—oh ! so handsome, with eyes like two stars, and black glossy hair—and such a mouth. They came up to where I was ; and our lady Bianca tried to thank him for saving her life, but she had been so frightened, poor thing, she could scarcely speak ; and we saw a

whole troop of huntsmen coming, so my lady turned to me and said, 'let us hasten home;' and she gave one look at the handsome knight, who seemed very unwilling to leave her, for after we went down the hill he continued gazing after her, as if his soul was in his eyes. But the huntsmen joined him, and the signora dragged me on so fast till we were out of sight; and then she stopped, and looked out from behind the thick trees, as if she was half sorry she had run away so quick. But they were all gone; we heard the huntsmen's horns grow fainter and fainter, and when the sound ceased entirely, the lady Bianca looked quite melancholy."

"And did you never see anything more of him?" enquired Nina of the head-gear.

"Never; but I well know he lives in my young lady's thoughts."

"Well, it is an odd story; a handsome knight, with star-like eyes and black hair;—who in the world can it be?"

"Ah! I wish we could discover," said Ma-

rianna; "that I cannot tell, but I strongly suspect the signora has seen him again!"

"Let me see," said Nina; "who is the most handsome Guelph in Florence?—for of course he cannot be a Ghibelline. I verily believe the young lady herself would not marry a Ghibelline, if she loved him ever so much."

"And yet her greatest friend at the convent was the young Amidei," said another.

"Ah! and when they had a quarrel," said Marianna, "when the lady Elvira did anything to displease her, she would always say, 'Ah! that comes of being a Ghibelline.'"

"Well, to be sure, the Ghibellines are devils," said Nina; "but still I must confess the peace we enjoy since the union of the parties, is far preferable to that constant fighting, when we could never stir out of the palace without the fear of being killed."

"Ay; but why could not that peace have been accomplished as well by the marriage of our young lord to the heiress of the Amidei?" said Marianna.

"God forbid the noble Cosmo Donati should

ever be allied to the rebel house of Amidei," exclaimed Irene, a black-eyed damsel, who was a special favourite with the old countess. "No," she continued, tossing her head with an air of proud mystery; "I well know he would be the last to wish it."

"And yet I have heard he wooed the lady Elvira, and was refused," said Marianna.

"Refused!—no, indeed; who in their senses would refuse the noble Donati? The old count, perhaps, might have objected; but as for the young lady, of course she would most gladly have accepted the handsomest and most valiant noble in all Italy," said Irene, while the enthusiasm which glowed in her black eyes, showed that she held her young lord in no mean estimation; "hush, I hear his step on the stair."

At this moment the door opened, and a young man, with a stern expression of countenance, which did not quite justify Irene's admiration, entered the room.

"Has my lady mother retired to rest?" he enquired.

"The light still burns in her turret-chamber,"

said Irene, with a familiar nod, after she had stretched her slender throat in the direction of the windows which commanded a view of the high tower before mentioned. "And as for ourselves, we are condemned to sit up all night to work at your sister's bridal dress; and I must say it's rather hard, especially as we don't know who the bridegroom is to be," she continued, with a sly gaze of curiosity.

Cosmo Donati either did not read the meaning of those fascinating eyes, or his thoughts were engrossed by other matters; for without deigning to say another word, he passed on, and departed through a door at the further end of the gallery.

Cosmo Donati found his mother in earnest consultation with an old astrologer, who passed most of his life in the Donati palace, and lived in the room above that of the countess, where he nightly made his observations on the stars.

"Welcome, my son," said the old lady; "all prospers. Antonio has shewn me that tomorrow is the day on which the fate of Florence—of the Guelphs, will be decided. 'Twill

be a day of retribution, fatal to the hated Ghibellines."

"And does my sister consent to become his wife?" said Cosmo.

"Consent! who ever thought of asking her consent? I have arranged it all, and am confident of success. Our followers will be secretly armed; a trusty band will arrive early in the morning from our possessions in the Maremme, to escort the young married pair to Castel Donatorre."

Cosmo shook his head. "Well, be not too sanguine, mother; and in the mean time, be cautious; your foolish refusal of Amidei's invitation to the marriage ceremony, was well nigh betraying our designs. Suspicion is now at work, and but for an interview I have had with Buondelmonte, all would be lost. But I have played my part well," continued the young man, with a malicious laugh; "I have, in appearance, renewed with him my former friendship, and I am more than ever convinced he will fall readily into our designs. He has a weak mind, that Buondelmonte, with all his boasted goodness."

“ But is he in love with his intended—I mean with the Amidei ?”

“ I think not, mother: when I led him to speak of her and of his approaching marriage, he was absent and confused, and dwelt more on the prospect of peace it held out to the country than of his own happiness.”

“ It is well ; now go, my son and seek repose, for your services will be much required to-morrow.”

CHAPTER IV.

. “ Fatal was the day
To Florence, when at morn, at the ninth hour,
A noble dame, in weeds of widowhood,
Weeds by so many to be worn so soon,
Stood at her door ; and, like a sorceress, flung
Her dazzling spell.

Subtle she was, and rich,
Rich in a hidden pearl of heavenly light,
Her daughter's beauty ; and too well she knew
Its virtue !” ROGERS.

At an early hour the following morning the Countess Donati sent for her daughter.

Bianca, though proud and determined, was always afraid of her mother ; she felt awed and strangely influenced when in her presence. And truly the countess was one of those resolute and imperious dames who combine the strength of a man, with the wily cunning, passionate feelings, and unsleeping animosities which characterize the weaker sex of southern lands. There was something in her air and countenance which was sure to influence all beholders, and bend them to her will. Her dark eyes seemed to penetrate the very souls of those on whom she gazed ; and there was a mysterious power and even charm in her clear full voice, an air of repose in the faultless features of her pale face, which fascinated as well as subdued those on whom she chose to exercise her will. It was said that the countess never slept at night ; the hours were passed by her in watching the stars ; and many whispered that at these hours unholy orgies took place, and magic incantations were employed by this strange lady against those who offended her.

Bianca Donati found her mother seated on

her chair of state, under a magnificent dais at the end of a large room, which was seldom used but on solemn and important occasions. Once only had Bianca entered that splendid yet gloomy room before. It was on the day her father was buried ; and though many years had gone by, the vivid impression of vague horror stamped on her young mind on that occasion remained with a yesterday's distinctness, and filled her with dread as she opened the ponderous door. As it closed behind her with a sound which echoed through the lofty hall, Bianca shuddered. Strange images of death and torture, and mysterious fate, seemed to flit before her affrighted gaze ; the very sound of her own light and trembling footsteps startled her, and recalled the fearful scene she had there witnessed—a scene which had haunted her imagination and often disturbed her dreams.

“ My child,” said the clear silvery voice of the countess.

Bianca hastened to obey its summons, anxious to be near something living, in this funereal abode. She stood before her mother's throne.

"My child," continued the countess, fixing her dark eyes with a stern and solemn expression on the pale countenance of her daughter. "I have sent for thee to hear my decision, to learn thy fate. This day will see thee wedded to a noble Guelf, a valiant knight, who was destined by thy father—by that parent whose lifeless form was once laid under this dais—to be thy husband. His spirit, the soul of thy revered parent, speaks in me now; prepare therefore to obey the will of both thy parents. Nay, tremble not; remember the noble blood which runs through thy veins—remember the heroes of thy father's house, the firmness and unshrinking character of thy mother's princely race, and be not unworthy of such ancestors. Go; attire thyself in the bridal dress I have prepared, and in one hour return to pledge thy faith at the altar of God to the husband I have chosen. Begone." And the countess waved her hand with an impatient gesture.

Bianca heard this decision with speechless dismay. She well knew how useless it was to remonstrate with her imperious mother on any

subject; and there was that in her parent's countenance which seemed to shew how useless words, or even prayers and entreaties would be, to bend its inexorable will. Bianca's faculties seemed paralyzed, too, in sullen despair; and scarcely knowing what she was doing, she approached the deep recess of a large window which projected over the narrow street.

The dark and solemn gloom of that mysterious apartment was so depressing that she instinctively turned to the bright light of day. Suddenly Bianca uttered a cry of joy. "It is he!" she exclaimed, opening the lattice, while a ray of joy darted through her mind and raised her drooping spirit.

The countess started, and approached the window with a countenance of surprise and displeasure. She looked in the direction in which Bianca was so intently gazing, and said, "My child, do you see that handsome cavalier on the white horse?"

"I do, indeed," exclaimed Bianca.

"Look at him attentively," continued the countess; "he comes from his castle in the Val

d'Arno to his stately palace in the Strada Maggiore ; soon he will pass this window again, attired in the dress of a bridegroom, to receive the hand of my daughter. That valiant knight, Bianca, is to be your husband."

It was the same !—it was the unknown knight whom Bianca had loved, whose image her enthusiastic imagination had dwelt on, the man she had sworn should alone obtain her hand. A few words explained the whole truth to the countess ; all fear, all perplexity was gone ; a smile, the first smile Bianca had ever seen on her proud mother's countenance, now illumined her features.

" Come, my child," she said, after a pause, and embracing her for the first time with the real tenderness of a mother ; " come, and swear solemnly at the altar of God to marry that knight."

Bianca followed to the chapel. There was a solemnity in the tone and step of the countess which, in spite of all her joy, inspired Bianca with a feeling of awe. The young girl's religious feelings were more those of fear than

love. The passions as well as affections of Bianca Donati were strong. As far as a young creature educated in a strict convent could, she had often erred ; and therefore never entered the holy temple of a God, whose existence she believed, without a sensation of terror mingled with remorse. Her joy was checked as she entered the dark and gloomy chapel ; and the vague feeling of apprehension, which had agitated her in the state apartment, returned. Her terror was encreased when the countess, with a severe countenance and stern voice, uttered words of strange import. The tones of her mother's voice struck deep into Bianca's heart ; the words perplexed and depressed her ; and when the countess ended, by saying with a gesture of more than usual command, " Swear before God and the holy Virgin to do all this," Bianca answered, with a choking voice, " I swear."

The lady's stern and agitated features became composed, and again she resumed a look of kindness. Bianca was attired in the beautiful dress the maidens had so skilfully made, and a

bridal veil of the finest tissue covered her lovely face, and flowed in graceful folds over her tall figure. The chapel was brilliantly illuminated, and the whole palace decorated with festal splendor.

CHAPTER V.

“ Patiently she stood and watched ;
Nor stood alone—but spoke not.—In her breast
Her purpose lay ; and as a youth passed by,
Clad for the nuptial rite, she smiled and said,
Lifting a corner of the maiden’s veil,
This had I treasured up in secret for thee.
This hast thou lost !”

ROGERS.

AFTER the departure of Bianca on the preceding evening, Elvira Amidei had another interview with her lover. He came to bestow the marriage presents, and to inform her of the success of his application to Cosmo Donati. He was in high spirits at this proof of the peaceful intentions of the Donatis, that family being the most powerful of the Guelf faction, and being besides nearly connected with his own. Buon-

delmonte embraced Elvira so joyfully that the poor girl wondered at her own stupidity in ever having doubted of his affection. Again she offered up fervent thanks to her God, and lay down to rest full of tranquillity and happiness. Her sleep was pleasant, and she was awakened in the morning by her old nurse and attendants to be attired in her bridal robes.

At an early hour the guests began to arrive. All the first families of Florence met in the splendid halls of the Amidei palace. Peace and good-will prevailed among the members of hitherto opposing factions ; and many, who had before only met in the field of battle or skirmishes in the streets, now spoke familiarly to each other. The Count Amidei's benevolent heart beat with joyful exultation as he gazed alternately on the peaceful countenances of those hitherto turbulent and passionate nobles, and on the lovely face of his darling child, whose beauty had been the cause of so much happiness.

The appointed hour arrived, but the bridegroom had not yet appeared. Elvira was too happy in the new consciousness of being loved

to feel any alarm ; her only regret was, that amid all the nobles and ladies of the Guelf party, she looked in vain for her dear friend Bianca Donati. At last, when nine o'clock arrived without any tidings of the bridegroom, the Count Amidei felt uneasy. The company began to whisper, and the Guelfs were observed to collect together in one part of the hall, as if apprehensive of some foul play. Count Amidei despatched a messenger to Buondelmonte's palace to enquire whether any misfortune had befallen the Count Rodrigo. Another hour of suspense, and the messenger returned, but brought no intelligence of the bridegroom. Buondelmonte's retainers said he had left the palace with his retinue two hours since ; and the rest of the attendants, who had remained to prepare for his reception, were in expectation of his return with the lovely bride.

To account for this strange delay we must return to the gloomy palace of the proud Donatis. After Bianca had been adorned with all the taste and splendour which her twelve accomplished tirewomen could devise, the countess, with joyful exultation, placed her in a beautiful little

boudoir near the chapel. The lady herself then took her station in the window of the gloomy state-room, where Bianca had seen her lover lately pass on his white charger. Beneath this window was a massive porch, in which stood the young Count Cosmo Donati, surrounded by his numerous retainers. The dress of all these was magnificent; yet beneath their richly embroidered vests might be seen the coat of mail. In conformity to a law which had passed on the late union of the two parties, they were apparently unarmed; but within the hall were piles of battle axes and other implements of war, which could be easily used in case of need; and Count Cosmo, with six of his Guelf friends, wore their swords and daggers. The street was nearly deserted; all the populace were congregated near the Amidei palace, or were attending the bridegroom's procession from his own palace to that of his bride.

"He has passed the gate," exclaimed one of the retainers, coming with breathless haste from the end of the street; at the same moment a distant shout of joy was heard.

“Viva, viva, il Conte Rodrigo! viva i Guelfi, ed il popolo!” resounded from a distance. Nearer and nearer it came; the tramp of steeds resounded through the narrow streets. Cosmo Donati and his retainers joined in the cry “Viva il Buondelmonte! viva i Guelfi!” Buondelmonte waved his hand as he approached near the Donati palace, and motioned to Cosmo to follow in the train.

“Stay,” exclaimed the Count, while he advanced and laid his hand on the rein of Buondelmonte’s charger—“my mother is ill; she cannot attend your nuptials—but she implores you to grant her a few moments’ interview.”

Buondelmonte expressed his regret at the lady’s illness, but declared that it would be impossible for him to delay for a moment. Donati, however, would not listen to his excuse: with an air of authority, mingled with entreaty, he prevailed on the bridegroom to dismount. “She will not delay you long,” he said; “remember that her brother and your father were the dearest friends.”

Buondelmonte, accustomed to be often in-

fluenced by the energetic determination of his friend, yielded, though most unwillingly, and was conducted to the state apartment. The countess was seated on her throne, under the before-mentioned dais.

“Son of my dearest friend Rodrigo Buon-delmonte, come hither,” said the lady, with a severe countenance and hollow voice; “you have belied your faith—you have deserted your cause—you have basely yielded to the wiles of the Amidei, those ancient enemies of your father’s house. Foolish boy! think you by this to ensure peace? Know, then, that as long as one Ghibelline shall remain alive, so long will party spirit reign—as long as a single Donati lives, the hated Ghibellines will not be safe. Is it thus you desert that people for whom your father bled? Is it thus you respect the memory of that great man, the grandfather of us both, who lost his life at the siege of an Amidei’s castle—the grandfather of that very Amidei you are now about to conduct to the altar. Do you call this peace—to become a court sycophant, to bow down to the tyranny, and shut your eyes to

the vices and crimes of the nobles? Have the cities of Italy ever prospered when the Ghibelines were in power? And after all, for what do you forfeit the esteem of your family, and sacrifice your friends and kindred?—for a silly girl, whom you do not even love. Ha, you start!—know then that my last hour is approaching, and that I can see into futurity. Yes,” she continued, with prophetic fire, “yes—and you shall be united also to the lady of your first, your only love; and the marriage with her will be the means of restoring happiness to your country, and glory to your kindred. I have not been unmindful of the son of my best friend. I have worked in secret for your happiness, as well as for the prosperity of the Guelfs. Come,” she added, with a proud smile of exultation, stepping down from the throne, and leading him towards the inner room; “here,” she continued, slowly raising the veil, and disclosing the bashful and lovely countenance of her daughter—“here is the bride I have provided for you.”

The room in which Bianca was seated, dif-

fered in the whole style of its decorations from the rest of the palace. A soft yet brilliant light penetrated through a large window of painted glass ; antique vases, of rare beauty, were filled with choice odoriferous flowers ; the walls were hung with rich damask of roseate hue : but Rodrigo saw nothing of all this—he was completely dazzled by the sight of Bianca's transcendant loveliness.

The old countess had been right in her supposition ; he was enamoured of the fair stranger, on whose heart he had made so deep an impression. He now saw the lovely being, whose image had dwelt in his imagination since the memorable day when he saved her from the ferocious boar. Buondelmonte gazed long and rapturously on the blushing girl, till he became so dazzled with her charms, that he forgot the whole world—every duty, every feeling was absorbed in the intensity of his admiration for that transcendant creature !

Bianca appeared more beautiful than ever. The embarrassment of her strange position gave a soft timidity to her air, which was sometimes

wanting to subdue the haughty expression of her regular features ; and gradually those eyes, which were at first downcast, ventured softly to raise their dark veil of silken lashes, and glance towards him from beneath its shade, with half-fearful, half-smiling bashfulness. Soon they were expressive of admiration and love ; and as she gained confidence in the affection she read in his countenance, Bianca suffered her own to express those feelings, which had so long and secretly formed a part of her being. She beheld, too, in the beloved object who was paying such deep though silent homage to her charms—she saw in him the chosen of her parents, her destined husband. Bianca rose from her chair, and perhaps unconsciously, extended her hand. It was instantly placed by the old countess within that of Buondelmonte.

“ Come, my dearest children,” she said, leading them along a passage which conducted to the chapel. Buondelmonte, bewildered by the strange occurrence, did not withdraw his hand ; but when he reached the illuminated chapel, and beheld the priest at the altar, he started, and drew back.

“ If your marriage be not celebrated this instant,” whispered the countess, with a menacing air, “ you shall never behold her again. Would you wish to break the heart of one who adores you ?—would you, in the face of all our family, refuse that hand which she herself proffered ?—would you so lacerate her feelings as to refuse her ?”

“ Only let me pause,” he said.

“ No ; I have sworn before that God, and I repeat the oath, that unless you marry my daughter during this very hour, she shall again return to her convent, there to take the veil. ’Tis useless to strive against fate,” she continued ; “ why should two hearts be severed which were formed for each other ?”

If Buondelmonte were sufficiently master of his thoughts to reflect at all at such a moment, he may have felt, that difficult as his position was, it would be encreased by delay. He felt it would be impossible for him now to fulfil his engagement with the Amidei, when his whole heart was engrossed by the lovely being at his side ; and when he had just made

the delightful discovery that he was loved by the beautiful Bianca, how could he condemn himself to be linked with another, when he was sure of possessing the heart of that adored being?

Buondelmonte retained the trembling hand of Bianca, and knelt with her before the altar of God.

The marriage benediction was pronounced! Scarcely had the nuptial pair risen from the altar, when sounds of tumult were heard from without. Cosmo Donati entered the chapel, and whispered a few hurried words to his mother. For a moment her lips quivered, and the habitual haughtiness of her look vanished; but as she turned towards the young pair, a smile of exultation and triumph gleamed on her pale countenance.

"All is prepared," she said, waving her hand to Buondelmonte, who was about to speak. "I have foreseen every difficulty; a conveyance is ready, at the western gateway, to take you both to our castle of Donatorre, in the Apennines. Make no objections—go, and spend a peaceful

and happy time with your bride. Cosmo and myself will arrange everything in your absence."

The image of Elvira—the deserted, forsaken Elvira, for an instant darted across the mind of Buondelmonte; but all the embarrassments of his strange situation—the excuses he would be obliged to make if he remained in Florence, forced themselves upon him; and to fly from these painful thoughts, and escape from the difficulties of his position, he determined to follow the Countess Donati's advice.

CHAPTER VI.

. He gazed, and was undone!


Forgetting, not forgot—he broke the bond.

ROGERS' ITALY.

THE nuptial pair departed from Florence, escorted by an armed band of the Donati retainers. Buondelmonte was, during the whole journey and subsequent evening, in high spirits. He knew that he had embarked on a dangerous course—that his hitherto unsullied reputation

was for ever blighted. Yet it was his own choice ; and the more he had risked and lost, the more determined was he to enjoy to the utmost the happiness for which he had sacrificed so much, and which could not last long. With the avaricious feeling of a person who has spent his all in the purchase of a costly jewel, he was determined to devote himself to its enjoyment, to cherish it the more from its having cost him so dear.

The castle of Donatorre was situated in one of those wild and picturesque mountain-valleys of the Apennines, between Pisa and Florence. Buondelmonte remembered having rambled over its woody glades and rocky heights, when as a boy he had visited with his father the old count Donati. And here, on the day after his sudden marriage, as he walked alone, he had time to reflect on his own strange conduct. The well remembered scenery recalled to his mind those visions of future greatness, those cherished prospects of being the regenerator of his country, which had then occupied him, even in the midst of his boyish sports.



Buondelmonte had been an amiable and steady child ; one of those naturally good characters which are expected to pass through life without committing errors or experiencing regrets, doing good to others, and enjoying happiness themselves.

But how often are these the very persons, who, when suddenly tried—when placed in any embarrassing situation, the difficulties of which they had never before contemplated—are apt to err ! Not being habitually a slave to their passions, they are not on their guard against a sudden burst of feeling. Accustomed to follow the dictates of a kind and benevolent heart, they are not distrustful of themselves, or prone to impute bad motives to others when they act with apparent kindness.

During his morning's ramble, Buondelmonte began to consider for what he had sacrificed all the benevolent hopes and ambitious dreams of his life, and lost Elvira, the lovely girl whose hand he had solemnly demanded, and who had learnt to love him deeply. He had perhaps wounded her gentle spirit, and destroyed her

happiness—and for what? To possess a creature adored and beautiful, it was true, but of the qualities of whose mind he was entirely ignorant.

Elvira had said that Bianca was her dearest friend, and this Buondelmonte now suddenly remembered; and as he thought of it, a burning blush of shame and sorrow mounted to his cheek; shame and detestation for himself, mingled with a feeling more painful still—a distrust approaching to contempt for his adored Bianca. The perfidy to which passionate love had made him blind in himself, he could not contemplate in her without a shudder of horror. How could she thus willingly and cheerfully marry the man who was destined for her friend?

And then the horrible and overwhelming conviction that he had been the dupe of a designing mother and daughter, rushed upon his mind; he reflected on the conversation he had had with Cosmo Donati, and the promise that noble had given to attend on the morrow at his marriage with Elvira.

The more he thought of all this, the more he was convinced that he had been the victim of

a long and deeply concerted scheme. At last he began to suspect that his first interview with Bianca, during the hunting party, had been also a part of the same design. He remembered the studied speech of the old countess on the preceding day; the artful manner in which she had worked upon his feelings, and alluded to his secret love for her daughter. The intoxicating and voluptuous air of the room in which the beautiful girl had been placed, the bridal veil, the illuminated chapel, and the priest standing at the altar, all shewed a determination, on the Donati's part, to force him into a marriage with Bianca.

There is nothing so humiliating as the conviction of having been duped. This feeling chills and contracts the heart, and is the most effectual extinguisher of even a passionate love. The morning was far advanced, yet Buondelmonte continued to wander among the woods. He was unwilling to return to the castle, for his feelings towards Bianca had undergone a wonderful change. From the deep and painful reverie

into which he had sunk, he was at last aroused by the sound of his bride's voice :

" Ah ! I have found you at last ; I have been searching for you every where. But what has happened ?" she continued, with anxiety, on beholding his pale and altered countenance ; " you are not even glad to see me ; I thought I could in an instant dispel a cloud from your brow. Can it be that you no longer love me ?" she exclaimed, with a half-reproachful, half-tender air—then seeing that her affectionate words seemed to increase his distress, that he appeared to turn from her with dislike, she burst into tears.

This was a trying sight, and Buondelmonte could not avoid being touched by so much loveliness in woe.

" Alas !" he said, in a mournful tone, and with an averted countenance, as if half-ashamed of his own weakness, " Alas ! your fatal beauty has for ever lost me. I have forfeited everything—country, friends, honour——"

" Gracious heaven ! do you then regret our marriage ? Ah ! if this be so, if you love me

not," exclaimed Bianca, with an air in which sorrow, love, and pride seemed contending, "if you care for me no longer, I will not remain with you ; I will never be an obstacle to your happiness, never !"

" Ah Bianca ! fatally lovely creature ! we are both unfortunate. After all, it is my own fault. Why was I so weak, so foolish, as to be duped by a designing woman, and—and a beautiful girl ?"—he continued in a low tone, as if following the train of his own thoughts.

" Duped !—is it possible then you did not intend to be my husband ?" said Bianca, covering her face with her hands, and sobbing violently ; then drawing herself up, and gazing at him with proud determination, she exclaimed, " I will not bear it ; no !—I see I have been too easily won ; fool that I was, thus to give my heart to a person who has proved so capricious and unworthy. But I will endure this treatment no longer. I would rather go barefooted to Rome, and throw myself on my knees before the holy father, and implore him to dissolve our marriage—I would rather—"

But poor Bianca could say no more : a painful sense of humiliation, the agony of having married—of having given her best affections—to one who loved her not, was too great for her proud nature to bear. She was utterly bewildered with the strange reverse of fortune ; and stunned by the intensity of her woe, she sank exhausted on the ground.

Buondelmonte was now deeply touched and astonished at the excess of her sorrow. Could such a proud and sensitive creature have stooped to act a part, and to have forwarded her mother's designs ? Softened by this thought, he endeavoured by every tender endearment to console and raise her drooping spirits. But Bianca was too deeply hurt to be again easily appeased ; she shrunk from his caresses with horror, and passionately ordered him to be gone.

It was now his turn to sue for pardon. He implored forgiveness for having suspected her of any evil design, and acknowledged he had been solely to blame. At last, finding that all his entreaties failed to remove the haughty disdain with which she regarded him, he appealed to

her pity ; he described his own forlorn condition—despised by his friends and lost to his country, all his best hopes blasted, his honour tarnished, and worst of all, perhaps his strange conduct had broken the heart of his betrothed bride.

Bianca heard him at first with sullen indifference ; but when he mentioned the words “betrothed bride,” she started up in horror ; her dark eyes flashed with eager expectations, and her whole soul seemed to hang upon his words. He continued—“ I hoped at least for sympathy ; I trusted that you, for whom I sacrificed not only the honour of my name, but the welfare of my country—I thought that you would pity my distress. But if you care not for me—if it is nothing to you that so foul a stain has fallen on the spotless race of Buondelmonte—you might at least have some compassion for the hapless fate of your friend Elvira.”

“ Buondelmonte ?—Oh God ! is it possible—is that the name you bear ? Elvira—Ha ! I see it all !” exclaimed the wretched Bianca, and sunk senseless in his arms.

It was long before Buondelmonte could succeed in restoring her to life, and then she began to rave incoherently. They were at some distance from the castle, and far from any habitation. Buondelmonte attempted to carry his hapless bride home in his arms ; but she seemed to have such a horror of his approaching her, that he had much difficulty in persuading her to allow him to do so.

Fortunately, Marianna, who knew that her dear young lady was not aware that she had married the betrothed husband of her friend, and who anticipated some dreadful scene whenever she should discover the name of her husband, had been searching for them in the park. She found them, just as Bianca, with the energy of incipient madness, was disengaging herself from the arms of Buondelmonte, and attempting to fly. She gently entreated the unfortunate Bianca to return home with her ; while she bitterly reproached Buondelmonte, for not having been more cautious in disclosing the truth to his bride.


“ Were you not aware,” she said, “ that Elvira was her dearest friend ? You little know

the temper of my signora, if you thought she would not suffer deeply from the conviction of having been even the innocent means of destroying her happiness."

Buondelmonte was too much agitated and horror-struck at what he had done, to attend to the observations and reproaches of the garrulous Marianna.

Poor Bianca was at last taken to her room, and the old nurse who had watched over her childhood, whose skill in the healing art was celebrated, was summoned to attend her. The old lady shook her head in dismay, and pronounced the lovely bride to be in a dangerous fever.

For several days and nights Buondelmonte watched with intense anxiety by the side of his unfortunate wife. He discovered in every word she uttered during her incoherent ravings, indications of the purity of her mind and affectionate disposition. The dear companion of her youth, the unfortunate Elvira, was uppermost in her thoughts. She bitterly accused herself of having destroyed the happiness of that beloved friend. She reproached her mother and brother



for their perfidy, at first in harsh and proud language, declaring that they had destroyed her peace and broken the heart of her lover : but gradually, as the violence of the fever abated, Bianca's heart seemed to soften, her pride was crushed, and all the reproaches were turned against herself. When Buondelmonte heard these touching words, his former love returned. It was now his turn to feel remorse and poignant regret, for having suspected for an instant the purity of her heart—of having thought it possible she could have forwarded her mother's designs, or even have had the remotest idea of the existence of any plot.

After five days and nights of anxious suspense, Bianca began to recover. She awoke from a long and deep sleep, and gazed around with something like consciousness. The presence of Buondelmonte seemed to give her more pain than surprise. She said nothing, but lay calmly reflecting on all that had occurred. Her first anxiety was for Elvira. Her affections, as well as passions, were strong ; and before her unfortunate interview with the unknown huntsman, the being she had most loved in the world was Elvira.

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And now, when she considered the injury which had been done to that gentle and angelic creature—when she thought of the peculiar shrinking delicacy of feeling, and humble opinion of her own merits, which had always made Elvira doubtful whether she possessed the affections of her betrothed—Bianca inwardly groaned at the conviction that she had been deserted and forsaken,—abandoned by her lover at the very moment of their intended union—and for whom? For a person wholly unworthy—for a person Buondelmonte had only once seen,—even for her own guilty self.

Poor Bianca could not avoid a feeling of contempt for the man who had been thus fickle. The first words she uttered, after reason had returned, were to reproach Buondelmonte for his cruel desertion of her friend. But when she gazed on his pale countenance, and saw what a sad alteration anxiety and woe had worked there, she was touched with sorrow for his sufferings, and burst into tears.

“We have both been unfortunate,” she exclaimed; “I will not add to your remorse,

by my reproaches. My mother is alone in fault;" she continued, with kindling eye. But Bianca's character had been altered, or rather the good qualities which were hers by nature had been developed by misfortune. From the wayward and spoilt girl she was transformed into the thinking, feeling, woman.

The first thing on which she exercised her usual determination of purpose, was a resolution to return at once to Florence and see Elvira; her next was to persuade Buondelmonte to apply for a dissolution of the marriage. She did not form this resolve with the proud petulance of animosity, but with a calm energy resulting from a sense of justice.

Her first feeling indeed had been one of anger against her husband. She was sadly disappointed in the character of the lover she had so enthusiastically adored, and adorned with every perfection which her glowing imagination could devise. That he should have been so much dazzled even by her own charms as to forget his engagement with Elvira, lowered him extremely in her estimation. But still love was far from

being extinguished in her heart, and therefore there was much of generosity in the wish to dissolve her marriage—much of disinterested and noble feeling in the sacrifice she was making.

Buondelmonte could not at first endure the idea of returning to Florence. He longed to hide himself from all his former associates, to shrink from everything that would remind him of his ruined prospects. His pride was deeply humbled, and all his darling projects so completely overturned, that his life seemed gone, and he could contemplate no possibility of happiness.

His love for Bianca was the only feeling which now seemed to link him with the world, or cast one cheering ray over the dark prospect of futurity. This love was increased as he saw more into the depths of her peculiar character; but then the very purity and firmness which he read there, made him tremble, as it convinced him she never would consent to continue his wife.

Buondelmonte's was not one of those dispositions to whom existence itself is enjoyment.

From early youth he always felt the necessity of having some pursuit, some object to engross the energies of a mind naturally gloomy though benevolent. Before love was awakened in his heart, a desire to regenerate his country had been his object and employment, and had become, in time, the passion of his existence.

To forward these views he demanded the hand of Elvira, the heiress of a rich and powerful family of the Ghibelline faction. He saw her once in the convent, which she had not yet quitted. He beheld her then for the first time, as his already affianced bride, and was pleased with her beauty and the bashful timidity of her manners, but his heart remained untouched.

Soon afterwards he went with a hunting party into the Apennines, and there occurred his strange interview with the unknown fair one whose life he saved. The more striking and transcendent beauty of Bianca made a fatally deep impression on his heart, whilst the romance of the adventure, and the mystery which hung over her name and place of residence, inflamed his imagination.

The image of the lovely stranger constantly recurred to his mind ; but still the desire of his country's good prevailed—he determined to keep his engagement with Elvira, and not even seek to discover the name of his unknown love. It cost him, however, many painful struggles ; his imagination had been so dazzled, his heart so deeply touched, that when he saw Elvira the second time, she appeared to him far less attractive than before, from the character of her beauty being so different from that of the secret idol of his thoughts. Hence arose that coldness of manner which had so perplexed the affectionate and confiding Elvira ; and hence at last was the cause of his so readily falling into the snare prepared by the Countess Donati.

But to return to Bianca, and her efforts to retrieve the fatal errors committed by her husband. Buondelmonte at last felt the force of her generous arguments, and her wish that he should quit at once this castle, which belonged to her brother, and return to Florence. He felt that his flight, that his non-appearance in Florence, would be attributed to a fear of the ven-

geance of the injured and insulted family of Amidei, or the now justly rekindled hatred of the Ghibellines against his kindred. Of all this he was convinced, but his energies were paralyzed ; he lingered on from day to day without coming to any determination.

Bianca would have departed at once and flown to her injured friend, had she not been deeply touched by the sad condition of Buondelmonte's mind. She who had seldom weighed or considered what duty was, before, now that she was actuated by the powerful stimulants of love and friendship, thought and acted for the best.


"Come," said she to him, "do not longer despond, or linger here and lose these precious moments. All may yet go well, and your early dreams, your ardent wishes for peace and prosperity to our country, may yet be fulfilled. See, you have gained one victory already," she continued. "I, who am the most inveterate Guelf in all Tuscany, now wish for peace between the two parties."

Buondelmonte felt grateful for the self-denying interest she evinced in his fortune, parti-

cularly as he saw that she loved him still. Strange to say, her innate pride was diminished, now that she found herself of real importance, and perceived that her conduct at this trying juncture would deeply affect the happiness, the destinies, of those two beings she loved best.

The responsibility of this situation struck her forcibly. There was not a single person she could consult. Her mother, of whom she had stood more in awe than any one, had acted with a deceit and baseness quite unworthy of the noble race from which she sprung ; and her brother had consented to the cruel scheme. She dreaded to return to her family, and trembled lest their watchful perseverance and party animosity should defeat her peaceful project.

In this lonely and important moment, Bianca fervently prayed to be guided. She had made the bitter discovery of the insufficiency of "man to guide his steps," and she sought for help and consolation where alone they could be found. Strengthened by prayer, she renewed her entreaties that Buondelmonte would no longer remain inactive. At last he consented to follow



her advice, and they departed together for Florence.

Bianca saw the necessity of concealing her design from her own family, and she therefore accompanied Buondelmonte to his palace, determining however to leave it soon afterwards secretly by a private entrance, and to seek refuge with her friend Elvira. They arrived at the Buondelmonte palace, and here Bianca took leave of her husband with the firm determination of never seeing him again.

There was a mixture of tenderness and solemnity in her manner at their last interview. All her love seemed to return. Twice she arose to depart ; but when she saw the look of despair on Buondelmonte's countenance, she returned to imprint one burning kiss on his forehead, and resolving to trust herself with him no more, she hastily left the house.

CHAPTER VII.

"O Buondelmonte, quanto mal fuggisti
Le nozze tue, per gli altrui conforti."

DANTE.

WE left the heiress of Amidei attired in bridal array, and waiting in the crowded halls of her father's palace for the arrival of her intended husband. Soon the real cause of the bridegroom's delay reached the astonished guests; but the report of his having actually married another person appeared so strange, that at first it was disbelieved. That Buondelmonte, who was known to be an honourable as well as valiant knight, should have acted in such a capricious and base manner, could scarcely be credited.

Amidei and his daughter both declared it to be impossible. Elvira felt convinced, too, that her dear friend Bianca could not have acted in such a treacherous manner, particularly after the conversation she had with her the preceding evening.

To remove all doubts, and relieve his daugh-



ter from her embarrassing position, Count Amidei repaired to the Donati Palace. There he learned from the retainers the fatal truth. He scarcely noticed that they were armed, or that the whole palace was in a state of defence ; he only thought of his unfortunate child, and hurried back to console and support her under this heavy trial.

Poor Elvira !—when she found there was no longer a doubt of Buondelmonte's baseness, and of the consequent treachery of her dearest friend, reason and consciousness seemed to forsake her ; she sank, apparently lifeless, into her father's arms.


He gazed on her deathlike countenance with agony. His darling child, the joy of his life, the consolation of his declining years, who was to have been the means of procuring peace and happiness to his country, was now sacrificed by the base object of her pure and holy love. Suddenly a dreadful thought flashed across the mind of Amidei—his whole nature seemed changed. Leaving his unfortunate child under the care of

her women, the enraged father hastened to assemble his relations and friends of the Ghibelline party.

His habitual kindness, the benevolence of his mind, seemed utterly gone ; and no one would have believed that the ferocious old man, who took his station at the head of a conspiracy, was the same who one short hour before, was full of mirth and goodwill and gentle happiness.

Eight days after this event, the convent where Elvira had passed her youth was the scene of unwonted bustle and preparation. The chapel was decorated with unusual care, for within its hallowed wall the heiress of the Amidei was about to take the veil. Elvira was arrayed in the same splendid attire she wore on the morning of her intended marriage. Her long fair tresses were adorned with costly pearls, and brilliant gems decorated her lovely neck and snowy arms.

The fate of the young and beautiful Elvira had excited intense interest among all ranks of people. This interest was felt even by many of the Guelfs, who, though again at war with the Ghibellines, strongly condemned the conduct of



Buondelmonte. The convent chapel was therefore thronged to excess, and many nobles were obliged to remain outside.

So great was the feeling of compassion for the young creature, whose earthly hopes had been thus cruelly blasted, that as the ceremony proceeded, the populace began to murmur loudly against their former friends, the Guelfs. Cries of "Death to the traitor! destruction to the Buondelmonte and viva i Ghibellini!" resounded through the streets.

Elvira was pale as death, but her lovely countenance wore an expression of peaceful resignation and heavenly forgiveness, which touched the hearts of all who beheld her. Once only, when the sounds of tumult from without met her ear, when she heard the cries of Death to the Buondelmonte, then only did a passing pang of deep regret cloud the serenity of her brow. But on her father's face there gleamed an expression of savage joy, when he heard the people's cry.

"Yes, death to the traitor," he muttered, and his hand convulsively clenched the handle

of his sword. Elvira heard the words, and cast a look of gentle reproach towards her father, while she pointed to heaven.

The abbess of the convent was in the act of severing the golden tresses from the graceful head they adorned, and the oldest nun was, with a look of holy joy, unclasping the jewels which decorated Elvira, when a piercing shriek was heard.

"Stay!" exclaimed the well-known voice of a young creature, who had also been educated in that convent.

"Stay, I implore you—there has been a fatal mistake!—arrest the ceremony—do not allow dear Elvira to be sacrificed. Oh! let me pass—let me speak to her! All may yet be well." And Bianca rushed through the dense crowd, and threw her arms round Elvira's neck.

"It was my fault," she continued, with wild energy. "He is innocent—oh! forgive him; there was a foul conspiracy—he never meant to wrong you."

Elvira started; and when she heard that Buondelmonte was less to blame than she

imagined, she was agitated by contending feeling feelings. For an instant, she seemed bewildered and undecided what course to pursue. But she prayed earnestly to be guided by that heavenly Father who had never deserted her in the hour of suffering—she still looked for consolation to heaven alone, and set all her hopes, all her joys, on the things above.

Bianca persisted in her entreaties that she would forgive Buondelmonte, and consent to become his wife; she urged the possibility of obtaining a dispensation to annul her own luckless marriage, and vowed solemnly to devote the remainder of her days to God.

“No,” said Elvira, in a firm yet gentle tone. “No, urge me no more—he loves you, I am certain he does; he never would have been happy with me, and I rejoice that God has spared me the pain of having rendered him miserable. May Heaven bless you both,” she continued, and then with a determined air lay down on the bier which was the emblem of her death to this world, and pressed to her lips the

ss, the emblem of her resurrection in a world to come.

Bianca stood near in speechless dismay. The funeral anthem proceeded—its loud and solemn strains resounded through the vaulted building. Amid these peaceful sounds the words of vengeance were heard. One of the conspirators approached Amidei, and whispered in his ear. Before Elvira rose from the bier, while as yet the last vows were unpronounced, which would separate her from the world, Amidei hastened out of the chapel.

CHAPTER VIII.

And hence a world of woe !
 Vengeance for vengeance crying, blood for blood ;
 No intermission. Law that slumbers not,
 And like the angel with the flaming sword
 Sit's over all, at once chastising, healing,
 Himself the avenger, went ; and every street
 Ran red with mutual slaughter.

ROGERS.

FROM a projecting window of the Buondelmonte palace, its unfortunate possessor watched


the departure of his bride. As he saw the cavalcade turn the corner of a street, and caught the last glimpse of her flowing dress, he sank down in utter despair. Bianca was gone—gone for ever. He felt he should never see her again, and all the glowing energy which her enthusiastic words, her beaming countenance, infused into his mind, had vanished. Now that he had become acquainted with the full beauty of her character—that his admiration for her was so much encreased, how could he fulfil his engagement with another? To look forward was dreadful. His life would be a long dreary blank, without one brilliant spot to cheer his lonely way. And the end—the grave! Was he fit to die? Was he prepared to render up an account for all he had done here below?

Buondelmonte felt utterly powerless to do any one good thing. His ardent wish was to depart from a world which had lost every charm. He had promised Bianca to exert his utmost influence to obtain a divorce; but if he should succeed in procuring one, how could he bear to

see the injured Elvira again? Could she ever be happy with him?—was it possible that she could so far forgive, as to become the wife of a man who had rejected her? Every thought was painful, every alternative dreadful and the grave seemed the only refuge from such perplexing and agonizing circumstances.

Buondelmonte had religion enough to prevent his committing suicide, but not sufficient to endue him with energy and vigor in the present difficult crisis.

Scarcely conscious of what he was doing, he wandered over the palace, and gazed on the preparations which had been made the preceding week for the reception of his betrothed Elvira. The splendid rooms had been decorated with costly hangings, and the floors strewn with the choicest flowers. Those flowers were now withered, and the festoons and arches of roses were drooping and changed. Buondelmonte felt they were sad emblems of the fate of that lovely creature, whose arrival they were to have graced. The happiness of her life was gone; for though he felt utterly unworthy of her love, yet



he was certain of having possessed it. Those withered flowers seemed to speak daggers to his soul!


On he passed through the deserted chambers, till he reached the large hall, where a splendid banquet for the guests had been prepared. The tables were still covered with costly dishes; and under a raised dais, were the two magnificent chairs, which had been placed for Elvira and himself. On one of these, which was emblazoned with the arms and surmounted by the coronet of his family, Buondelmonte threw himself in despair. He felt that the glories of his proud race were gone; he had tarnished a name hitherto honored and respected among the nobles of Tuscany, and after a short interval of peace, his conduct had again plunged his country into the horrors of civil war.

“Yes, they all—all execrate me,” he exclaimed, as the shouts of the people from without met his ear; and their imprecations on his name aroused him from the dull, heavy despair into which he had sunk. “I will not shrink from their just vengeance,” he cried, with a

bitter smile, as he hurried down stairs and called for his charger. He longed to face the offended populace; and it was with a thrill of something like hope that he mounted his white horse, and galloped along the street.

“ Let us follow ; quick—quick to horse, and arm yourselves !” exclaimed old Roberto, the esquire and foster-father of Count Buondelmonte. “ There is treachery—the people are furious. Oh ! haste, and let us save our dear master,” continued the old man, as with a look of anxiety and despondency he equipped himself for combat. Many times had he followed his beloved chief to the war, but never had the old man’s heart sunk till now.

Buondelmonte no sooner appeared in the piazza than the shouts and yells of the people were redoubled. That same people, whose idol he had formerly been—the populace, whose approbation had always been his chief delight, for whose good he had toiled, and whose well-being he had never forgotten till his fatal marriage with Bianca — that people now hated him. Here was a bitter, humiliating reality,—a



dire confirmation of his worst fears. As he rode along, Buondelmonte recognized many well-known faces. He saw some of his warmest admirers turn away from him with looks of contempt or anger, while the countenances of others were expressive of pity. And these last touched him most !

The distance from the Buondelmonte palace to the Ponte Vecchio, was not more than a quarter of an hour's ride, yet it seemed an eternity to the unfortunate Count. Every succeeding weary moment convinced him more and more that all chance of peace, all prospect of regaining the people's affection, or promoting their welfare, was gone for ever.

A convent bell tolled—it was from the chapel where Elvira was pronouncing her vows. Unconscious of this, unconscious that Elvira was placing an eternal barrier between them, and that soon there would be no obstacle in the way of his union with his adored Bianca, Buondelmonte ardently wished that solemn sound might be his funeral knell. The heart-stricken and deeply humbled Count breathed a fervent prayer

that God would either give him courage to live and act right, or grant that he might perish, even if his death-blow came from the hand of a former friend.

He was about to cross the Ponte Vecchio, when his horse was suddenly arrested by a figure muffled in a dark cloak. "Fly instantly," whispered the stranger. "Leave Florence by the Lucca gate. Lose not a moment; the conspirators—the chiefs of the Ghibellines—are assembled under the statue of Mars. You will not pass the bridge alive."

There was something in this intelligence which seemed to make the heart of Buondelmonte beat with joy; something which responded to the prayer he had been uttering; and yet he did not give full credit to the stranger's words.

"It will, however, be base to fly from a fancied danger," thought he; and without answering the figure, he put spurs to his horse, and galloped over the Ponte Vecchio.

"Well—my conscience is clear now; if he

be determined to die, he must follow his course."

"Who talks of dying?" exclaimed the old Squire Roberto, who had followed his master as quickly as possible, and had seen the man arrest Buondelmonte's horse with a suspicious eye. "And what induced you to stop the noble Count on his way?"

"I would have saved his life," said the stranger, looking with anxiety towards the further end of the bridge;—"I would have saved him from those accursed Ghibellines: but it is too late," he continued, scanning the little group of armed retainers; "and your numbers are too small to offer any resistance, so God's will be done," added he, in a solemn tone, as he disappeared amid the populace.

Old Roberto, who had not been sufficiently near his master to hear the whispered warning, could not comprehend the particular danger which threatened him; but his anxious gaze was rivetted by a crowd and skirmish at the opposite side of the bridge.

"They have seized him—the Buondelmonte

falls!—murder! treachery!” shrieked the old man with horror; and followed by the little band, he darted with the speed of lightning across the bridge.

A multitude of people, among whom were the chiefs of the Ghibelline faction, surrounded the statue of Mars. An awful silence reigned, and the countenance of the mob wore an expression of direfully satisfied revenge.

The brilliant rays of a May-day sun illuminated the group, and glittered on their shining corslets and gaily plumed helmets. The broad river flowed on in calm repose with a gentle murmuring sound, and the face of nature was joyous. The solemn tones of sacred music were heard from the adjoining church, mingled with the glad song of birds in the convent garden.

One deeply troubled breast was still. A suffering heart had ceased to beat—a wearied and perplexed spirit had flown to the realms of eternal peace.

“He has not slept so tranquilly for many a day,” said old Roberto, after the first burst of grief and anger had passed away, and he stood and gazed on the placid features of his beloved

master. "He looks so happy, I could almost forgive the hand that dealt the death-blow. May God be merciful to his soul, and forgive his errors!"

"Amen!" muttered a faint hollow voice. It was that of Count Amidei, who stood near, leaning on a sword which was steeped in blood.

"Ha! are you the murderer!" exclaimed the old esquire, as he grasped his sword, and looked with fury on the father of Elvira. But when he saw the expression of deep sorrow, of hopeless despair, on the old noble's countenance, Roberto paused. The sight of that heart-stricken father recalled to the squire's mind his master's errors, and the injured and forsaken heiress of Amidei. His sword fell harmless to the ground, he covered his face with his hands, and wept aloud.

But the kinsmen of the assassinated Buondelmonte, and the whole faction of the Guelfs, were not influenced by the same Christian feeling as the old esquire.

Buondelmonte's death was fearfully revenged. I will not, however, describe the unhappy wars

which desolated Florence for many years afterwards. The two heroines of my tale—the two friends—found peace in the convent where they had passed their happy childhood. Together they wept over the untimely fate of him who had been so fatally dear to them both—together they prayed for the prosperity of their country, whose peace they had been the innocent cause of troubling—together they thought, felt, and loved during the remainder of their lives. Long after their pure spirits had found rest in the bosom of their Maker, was the memory of Bianca Donati and Elvira Amidei cherished in the convent; and their example of good works and cheerful endurance of sorrow was held up for praise and imitation.

CHAPTER III.

The use and danger of Society.—Thoughts during a
Winter's Journey to Ireland.

THOSE who do not feel in the humour for the following grave and sage reflections I made during a dull journey in the dreary month of January, are requested to skip them and go on to some other part.

Wednesday, 17th.—When I opened my Bible this morning, I thought that the map of my life and death was spread before me in glowing, vivid, joyful colours. I saw the hand of God pointing out my path, and felt sure of being sustained in all trials. These cheering views were suggested by the 143rd, 144th and 145th Psalms.

I felt my mind so fed by the sight of these verses,

“With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
 Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
 The dreary intercourse of daily life,
 Nor the fretful stir
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
 Will hang upon the beatings of my heart,
 Or e'er prevail against me, or disturb
 My cheerful faith.—”

For these dark things and the “many shapes of joyless daylight” described in the above detached lines of Wordsworth, I have often felt, and dreaded perhaps more than felt; the world and all therein have been kinder to me than I deserved, and amid much misunderstanding has, I think, understood me much better than I expected, and been far more lenient than I anticipated.

If we are fully conscious of our own unworthiness, we are indeed flattered by unexpected praise; and though it is painful and distressing to have a very low opinion of our powers, yet

the unexpected joy of being understood and sympathized with, is great in the extreme, and compensates for hours and years of doubt, fear, and hopeless inactivity. To return to the pleasant map of futurity ; how delightful are those moments when we seem to be gifted with a holy confidence, with a firm hope of attaining at last the prize of our high calling. It is not in these hallowed moments that we expect our path through this world will be prosperous ; far otherwise,—we foresee many difficulties, doubts and perplexities, many snares and temptations ; but these only serve to enhance the value of that eternal rest, when there will be no more fear.

Nor should we wish our path through these to be a short one ; we should be content and joyful to endure and strive, and be counted worthy to suffer for the Redeemer's sake, even though our sufferings should proceed from that most humiliating and depressing of all causes, our own perverse natures ; for I verily believe all other woes are light to a proud spirit, compared with self-abhorrence, the consciousness of sin and the total inability to do any one good

thing. To depend for every good thought on the Maker is the last resignation which a proud being likes to make. Some of us feel we have so many evil thoughts, that we learn, from sad yet sweet experience, that the few good ones which illumine our path through life came alone from God.

Evil thoughts sometimes turn our good natural gifts to poison. In the delightful retirement of rural life—a life I enjoy more than any other—I have, in the midst of nature’s loveliness, and when far away from those temptations to sin which are generally considered most dangerous, I have suffered, and do now suffer from a low opinion of myself. I feel

“There is a luxury in self-dispraise ;
And inward self-disparagement affords
To meditative spleen, a grateful feast.”

“Pronouncing on my own desert
I judge unthankfully, distempered nerves
Infest the thoughts, the langour of the frame
Depresses the soul’s rigour.”

Sadness is not wisdom with me. My disposition is so gloomy and melancholy

by nature, that I am obliged more than others, to try and discover the good, and beautiful, and happy in all things ; and, thank God, by earnest prayer and His grace, I have been enabled to do so to a degree that makes people imagine my temper to be most cheerful.

From the difficulty of their attainment, I consider joy and content the greatest virtues. I value them therefore for many more reasons than the happiness they afford. I value them because I feel that the reverse is that sad and guilty feeling, which made Cain despise his brother, and be jealous of his favour with God—that feeling which is also described in numberless other parts of the sacred volume, and which was, too, one of the most powerful motives that led our first parents to transgress. I do not say this is the case with most people ; there are indeed many whose buoyant natures require the depression of sadness, or even despondency and grief. After severe trials such a one may go forth,

“A sadder and a wiser man.”

How delightful it is, after reading or hearing

of the jarring contests, and the querulous disputes among the religious sects of the present time, to turn to the inspired word of God with a mind ready and willing to receive the precious truths which it contains. Oh! that we would all consult the sacred volume silently and fervently, and not perplex each other with theories and doctrines, which have indeed their origin in the Bible, but which come forth perverted or exaggerated by the peculiar bias of a sanguine, but perhaps mistaken, mind.

With all our determination to be honest and sincere—with all our wishes to do good to others, we preach to ourselves, when we would admonish them: we lay most stress on those portions of Scripture which apply to our particular position, to our own infirmities; and thus we often perplex and stagger those who require, perhaps, quite a contrary treatment. If I were to give to the world all the observations and disquisitions I have at different times made on Holy Writ, I now am quite convinced I should mislead many. For knowing my own gloomy and misanthropical disposition, my distaste for the

society of my fellow-creatures, I have dwelt and pondered and expatiated on all those passages of Scripture which show, that so far from shunning the society of any set of people, we should cultivate the acquaintance of all, and exercise the utmost charity of feeling towards those whose opinions are contrary to our own; and "that we should be all things unto all people, if by any means we might save some."

But I now see with delight, and it is a truth of which every day's experience convinces me more and more, that there are comparatively but few people in the world who require thus to dwell on those portions of Scripture which tend most to cure the natural defects of *my* mind. I now see that these are not the most common defects of the human race; and therefore those teachers of the present time, who are called evangelical, whose chief object is to caution their disciples against the snares of society, the dangers of the world—that is, what they call the world, namely, parties, balls, &c., and such intercourse with general society—are perhaps

right, though to me their doctrines would be poison.

Our first impulse is to judge others by ourselves, and therefore I endowed mankind with my chief defects; and I felt for a long time extremely annoyed at those doctrines being so ably, so convincingly delivered, which, instead of remedying, minister to the diseases of my mind.

I thought and wrote much on what I conceived to be the dangerous precepts of these really good people; but since I have learned how few there are who, like me, remain uninfluenced by the society they happen to be in, and who, instead of following, would be prone to dispute the correctness of those opinions which their immediate associates hold—that, on the contrary, most people look kindly and lovingly on their companions, and from the very kindness and cheerfulness of their dispositions are prone to copy even the vices of their neighbours, I now see, that I was wrong in condemning those pastors who try to lead their disciples out of such temptations, and place them


in the comparatively safe companionship of that set who consider what they call the world, that is, general society, to be extremely dangerous.

Nature and early education, or rather circumstances, have made me so isolatedly different from most people, that I at last see the folly of trying to judge for them. When I was writing and admonishing for their good, I was doing so to their harm. I was also blind to the superior cheerfulness and buoyancy of most minds to that of my own. I could not easily imagine that those animal spirits which I found it so difficult to assume (in order that my gloomy sadness might not depress the society I was in) were to them a spontaneous feeling, which made them enjoy the so-called pleasures, which to me had no attraction—that the sort of parties or places where I went, as to a school for my misanthropical temper, were to them recreations dangerous, because they found them pleasant.

I have always felt that the world, the society of different characters and sets of people, is necessary to rub down my defects, and to clash

against my opinions; and that I have been worse from a too great indulgence of my favorite solitude. Even the assumption of animal spirits has had its advantages; and I should not now enjoy so keenly and conscientiously the pleasures of going to a retired place, if I had not been obliged to exert in the haunts of mankind that self-denial, and call forth those cheerful and social qualities, in which I am so deficient. I now, at last, feel that I can indulge in the delights of retirement for a time without danger. That education, which as a child I could never receive, I felt I was destined to acquire in the world's hard school. I am now glad that I never fulfilled my intention of publishing what I wrote on the prevailing spirit of religion in the present time, though I know, as the subject has always engrossed my deepest and most anxious thoughts, that it was the best thing I ever wrote.

When people are very anxious to display some accomplishment, it shews that the acquire-



ment of it must have cost them a great deal of trouble, and that they have very little genius for it. We seldom care to be admired for those qualities which we feel sure of possessing; because we do not want to have our conviction that we possess them, confirmed by the applause of others.

The disposition which is most likely to make us lastingly happy, is an habitual desire to make others so.

Those who are determined to see and judge for themselves, must pass through many errors. The common beaten track is the easiest and safest, and will certainly lead to more wisdom of action, if not of thought; because it is the result of the judgment and experience of many.

There are yet some delightful moments in this life, even after our hopes have been crushed, and our expectations deceived. There is yet a feeling of peace, and perhaps also of more present enjoyment, when we have quite ceased to expect the happiness we wished for here below, than before we had been deceived by the world or ourselves.

Mistrust happiness which proceeds from mere prosperity, or success in undertakings. That mind which depends on outward circumstances for enjoyment, is in as unhealthy a state as a body which requires the stimulant of wine, or the soothing effect of opium. The delight arising from prosperity is intoxication ; and, oh ! how different from it, is the "Peace of God," which is the only source of true happiness.

People have a right to be idle, if idleness can give them pleasure. Having no turn for it my-

self, I feel the more respect for those who can derive enjoyment from doing nothing. Indeed, I sometimes think it shews the very height of philosophy.

It is simplicity of mind which causes most of the irregularities and apparent infirmities of genius. Genius does not calculate. It often writes from spontaneous impulse, without weighing well the effect which will be produced on the reader.

When grief is so intense as to make us fly from the place which recalls the memory of a departed friend, there is generally mingled with it a feeling of remorse.

The same connexion exists between the mind and our employments, as between the mind and body. Writing a melancholy tale, made me sad long after the story was finished. I have now

determined to write a happy one ; and I already almost unconsciously see the same things in a cheerful point of view, which formerly made me gloomy.

If, as some maintain, we can think of but one subject at a time, how happens it that the scene where we have read or heard anything which has made much impression on our minds, is connected with that impression ? In other words, how are we susceptible of association of ideas, unless we can think of two subjects at a time ? How often, when I think of a particular passage in a book, does the room in which I read it, or the scenery through which I travelled at the time, recur to my mind.

It is the power of double thoughts which makes us admire similies in poetry. We like to be half diverted from the predominating idea, for then we enjoy it the more : we find this even in a mind so habitually under control as that of Scott : " I cannot," said he, " nail my mind to one subject of contemplation ; and it is by nour-

ishing two trains of ideas, that I can bring one in order."—*See Lockhart's Life of Scott.*

There is always some point of resemblance and sympathy between the most opposite characters; those who have the power of discovering this connecting link most quickly, are the happiest and most agreeable, or happy-making people.

The anger we feel against worthless and sinful persons shews, that we believe them to be capable of becoming better. This argues that that we have within us, a strong feeling of free-will and responsibility; for we should not think that others are capable of improving, unless we felt conscious of having a control over our own passions and characters. We never feel anger against the personal defects of others, because we know they are irremediable.

It is want of expansion of mind which induces us to be so exclusively engrossed by any

study, pursuit, or the society of a particular set of people, as to make us neglect all others. This narrowness of mind should be strenuously guarded against ; it makes us neglect opportunities of general improvement, and renders us insensible to advantages and beauties which surround us ; and sometimes it even induces us to be unkind to persons who chance to interfere with our time, or who do not belong to our favourite set.

It is certainly a perversion of genius if it make us melancholy. Those whose minds are more powerful than their less gifted companions, ought to have in them a greater power of enjoyment.

As a good chess-player is often beat by a bungling beginner ; so is a wise man often more perplexed by the sudden determined silly enquiry of a fool, than by the most abstruse question of a clever man.

In these days Queens are more likely to obtain permanent influence than Kings ; because the frailty of their sex seems to give each of their subjects a power of protection, and this persuasion is always gratifying to our natures.

Persons possessed of much talent or character, are actuated through life by one powerful motive, on which all their minor actions and pursuits depend ; yet they are often unconscious of this dependence. I believe it is possible to go through a great portion, or perhaps the entire of our lives, without being aware of the great main-spring of our actions.

One reason of the great difficulty we find in acquiring a knowledge of ourselves is, that as soon as we become really acquainted with any of our long hidden qualities, we insensibly change. For instance, the very circumstance of knowing we are self-conceited, makes us become less so ; yet we still go on thinking we are so, till at last

we find, to our infinite astonishment, that in some instances we are not. How often, on the other hand, do envy, malice and uncharitableness lurk in our hearts, when we think they are full of love and goodness.

Apparent inconsistencies in character are often caused by an overstrained effort to remedy defects in the disposition. Thus some people who feel they are naturally extravagant, occasionally fall into the opposite extreme, and become stingy; while those who have violent tempers and anxious dispositions and are aware of these defects, from the same cause, become apparently cold and indifferent.

Wednesday.—Sir —— has just been here; he spoke little, but seemed to enjoy extremely the foolish things I said. He is an author, and I observe that in society, professional authors generally give impulses to conversation, while they only receive impressions themselves. They say

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but little, while they contrive to make their companions say much. Hence it is that professional authors are frequently less agreeable than people expect; though, fortunately for myself, I am acquainted with many brilliant exceptions;—they are more anxious to receive ideas, than to impart them to others—they keep their impressions and observations for the press.

To have a good opinion of themselves, is the greatest happiness to those in whom self-esteem is the strongest quality. As they love nothing so much as themselves, so do they care for nothing so much as their own good opinion. It is to confirm this good opinion that they are anxious for the commendation of others; and if they obtain praise even for qualities they are conscious of not possessing, they lend themselves to the sweet delusion, and try to fancy they deserved it.

Loyalty, or attachment to ancient places and things is, in some minds, like natural religion, an

instinctive feeling. I have a most enthusiastic veneration for old families, places and institutions, which I cannot trace to any cause, either in early habit or education.

Unstable characters belong to those, who have a low opinion of their own minds. They are apt to imagine that every one is better than themselves, and therefore easily yield to the opinion of those who have influence with them at the moment.

We suffer in proportion as we *feel*, and we meet with less sympathy if we feel deeply. Many people say to their friends, with a sort of supercilious smile, "Surely you have no cause for sorrow—you have indeed lost parents and friends; but that must happen to every one." So it may; but then it does not follow that all hearts are interwoven in the same degree with those of their lost relations and friends.

"If self employ us, whatsoe'er is wrought,
We gratify that self, not him we ought."

COWPER.

When we candidly wish to ascertain if selfishness or vanity enter into the motives which induce us to do good, we should ask ourselves whether it would afford us equal pleasure to see that same good done by another person.

We live and learn ; but we do not live and remember. We make but little practical use of the reasonings either of others or ourselves. Our minds vary, but seldom radically improve. Our unwillingness to be warned by the experience of others is not surprising ; but that we should forget or be blind to our own experience, is most strange. Yet we see this, and feel it, every day.

It often happens that those who make any particular pursuit or study their chief occupation, have much less talent for that pursuit than many persons who never attempt it. How many brilliant

geniuses are lost to the world, either from indolence, indifference to fame, or from the excess or versatility of their powers. We see weak, narrow minds high in office, while others, who seem exactly fitted for it, dream away their days in retirement, or lavish their brilliant ideas on the gay and thoughtless, who, though they admire cannot appreciate them. A great power of imitation, without much imagination or originality ; a large share of impudence or perseverance ; and a great desire for *present* applause, are qualities more likely to succeed, than a transcendent genius or a very superior mind. It seldom happens that genius of a very original stamp, is fully appreciated by its contemporaries.

Little every-day trials have a more irritating effect on the temper than great misfortunes, because we do not think it necessary to exert so much energy to bear them. This is one reason why men are generally better or more even-tempered than women. They are not so much subjected to the hacking though apparently unimportant trials of daily life.

Those only are hurt at reproof who feel they cannot improve. If we are conscious of a power to become better, or to excel in any pursuit, we shall not be angry with those who point out our faults.

Many people rail against the following sentiment, which is so beautifully expressed by Wordsworth: I am, however, inclined to think there is much truth in it:—

. “This earth,
Which is the world of all of us, and where
We find our happiness, or not at all.”

Because the sure and certain hope of future bliss ought to brighten our darkest days here. We should be able by true religion to find happiness in ourselves, when circumstances and outward events are most adverse. Many people say this is impossible; but it requires only a little consideration to see that it is quite possible.

Most of us ardently desire something—we imagine, that if such and such things were to

occur, or that we could succeed in some favourite enterprise, we should be perfectly happy. Now if we were quite sure, that at the end of a few days or months, or even years, our dearest wishes would be inevitably fulfilled, would not our present discomfort or misery be forgotten? and should we not live in joyful anticipation of the certain future? If we had real faith in the promises of God, we should feel such a certain hope of future joy—of a happiness far more perfect than any this world can afford—that our whole existence would be brightened by it. If, in short, we were true Christians, our present sufferings, which cannot endure very long, would cease to occasion the misery they do.

When all other pleasures fail, much enjoyment may be found in a daily and hourly effort to improve our dispositions. The actual pleasure which may be derived from this occupation, should by no means be despised. When we are in the humour to do this, we hail the rubs and difficulties and annoyances of our path with delight, as opportunities to exercise our faith and charity; in the same manner that an artist would rejoice in the sight of rugged

mountains, deep shadows, or fine effects of storm, which would afford good subjects for a picture. We are often miserable for want of some object in life—some end which would engross all our faculties, and towards which all our energies might be directed. Let that end be to become good, to use every trial and disappointment as a means to prepare for the beautiful hereafter, and the blessed companionship of the great Redeemer.

What a charming book is Degerando's "*Du Perfectionnement Moral*!" His chapter on peace of mind often occurs to me : he says :—" Il y a toujours dans la melancholie quelque chose où s'annoncent des facultés qui ont dévié de leur cours, qui divaguent, qui sont peut-être surabondantes et hors de proportion avec la situation de l'individu, mais qui, ramenées à leur vraie tendance, et trouvant une carrière en rapport avec elles, deviendraient fécondes." In another place he says :—" La plupart des passions humaines ne sont que les debordemens d'une activité qui a méconnu son veritable cours."

How true is the observation which ends his most able work. "Mettre en lumière le parfait accord de la vraie philosophie et de la vraie religion, et ce sera toujours, et peut-être spécialement dans ce siècle, servir à-la-fois, dans leurs plus chers intérêts la cause de toutes les deux." Some of his observations put me in mind of those in Herder's *Ideen*; not that they are imitated—far otherwise; but when persons have the same object in view, they often make use of the same arguments, to prove the truth of their observations. Degerando and Herder are both actuated by the most noble feeling which can actuate our nature,—a wish to serve the cause of religion and truth. Herder says—"Religion ist also, auch schon als Verstandesübung betrachtet, die höchste humanität, die erhabenste Blüthe der menschlichen Seele."

A person whose unassuming manners shew that he has not a high opinion of himself, is often judged with severity, by ignorant or common-place people—I mean when that person has much genius, or excels in anything. Unassum-

ing worth excites even more jealousy than arrogant bearing among those who pretend to superiority without possessing it, because its very unpretension seems to cast some sort of reproach upon themselves. They cannot imagine that a person who does not appear to think much of himself, should really be superior; and when they have proof positive that he is so, they are mortified at having been deceived.

Degerando says with truth, that real simplicity of character is rarely appreciated as it deserves. Of a simple character he says:—
“*Quel surprise ensuite n'excite-t-il pas, quand il vient à exécuter de si grandes choses, à les exécuter comme si elles lui étaient naturelles ! Ou avait vécu avec lui sans le remarquer ; on l'avait dédaigné peut-être ; on est contraint de l'admirer, et on se demande où donc il a puisé des forces si merveilleuses.*”

This surprise and consequent anger at finding superior worth under an exterior of humility, exists chiefly among small societies, and in remote places. Those who are accustomed to live in an extended and very refined society, acquire

too much knowledge of the varieties of human character to be easily deceived. They soon discover real merit ; and even if they feel no admiration, yet they give it the praise it deserves. The tact acquired by living in cultivated society, shews them, that by withholding praise that is due, they would expose themselves to the charge of being envious. Pretension, too, is only tolerated in remote or small societies ; for large societies generally contain many persons of real worth, and therefore, the pretensions of those who lay claim to merit without possessing it, are sure, in time, to be unmasked.

If we are willing, and really try to discover good qualities in others, our search is often rewarded with success. Perhaps the very wish to find the sunny side of the characters we meet with, calls their good qualities into play. When I am in a cheerful and benevolent humour, I almost invariably find these qualities in others ; and vice versâ, when I am suspicious, uncharitable, and disagreeable, so are those I meet with.

There is an excitement in misfortune, which some people secretly enjoy. I mean, of course, when it is not caused by any fault of our own. When reverses of fortune call forth feelings of resignation or fortitude, the sensation produced is powerful, and therefore almost pleasant. Even without this, many of us prefer a new suffering to an old long-experienced prosperity ; that is, in other words, we dislike even a monotony of happiness. To some people, an actual misfortune, a positive excuse for suffering, gives a vent to pent-up feelings of discontent and ill humour, which have long, though perhaps almost unconsciously, troubled their hearts. In this case it does good ; the mind has been choked up by minor griefs and fancied ills, and like a muddy stream, it is purified by the overflowing torrent of misfortune.

It is very easy to find fault, and there are many reasons for doing so, besides its facility. These reasons are despicable, and show the worst parts of human nature ; but still they are so strong, that few of us can resist being actuated

by them. To find fault, not only flatters our own self-love, but that of others. When we can thus gratify our friends at the expence of one unfortunate individual, the ill-natured impulse, already strong in itself, becomes almost irresistible.

The other night, when I beheld the beautiful Mrs. D——, and her unfortunate-looking husband, I reflected that we too often do more for our enemies than for our friends. When a girl sacrifices her inclination, and marries a man she cannot love, to procure riches and honours, does she do so from a wish to acquire more good will or respect from those she loves? Certainly not; her object is to triumph over those who excite her envy and consequent dislike—none wish to raise themselves above those they really love.


CHAPTER IV.

Morling of Ulster—A Tale from the ancient history of Ireland.

Carrigmahon, Thursday.—THE wandering poet has been here several times lately—the old man who told me the story of the two wives, which was related in my *Rambles in the South of Ireland*. He accompanied us during our walk to-day, and the conversation happened to turn upon the absence of serpents from Ireland. I find he has not much respect for the popular notion, that St. Patrick expelled them from the country ; but instead of rejecting a miraculous cause for their non-existence, he, with true antiquarian spirit,

dives into ages far remote, for the real origin of their destruction. He quoted a passage from an old history :—

“ ‘ Niul, son of the King of Scythia, being very learned in the languages, multiplied by the confusion of Babel, made a voyage into Egypt, where he married Scots, daughter of King Pharaoh Cimeris, and established himself in the country near the Red Sea. Niul had by this princess a son called Gaodhal, who, at the time that Moses was making preparations to free the people of Israel from captivity, having been bitten by a serpent, was presented by his father to the holy patriarch, who cured him by the touch of his wand. But there remained always a green spot in the place of the wound, which caused him to be called Gaodhal-glas, or Gadelas, the word glas, in the Scotie language, signifying green. Moses foretold, on curing him, that the land which would be inhabited by his posterity would be free from serpents and all venomous reptiles, which has been verified with regard to the islands of Crete and Ireland.’ From him is our



great ancestor, Milesius, descended," continued the old man. "He was of Gallicia, in Spain, and visited Egypt, where he married a princess, also called Scots, daughter of Pharaoh Nectonebus. This princess came to Ireland with her children, after her husband had died in Spain. She was killed in one of the battles which the invading Milesians had with the original inhabitants of our island, and was buried at the foot of a lofty mountain, in a valley called, after her name, Glean Scoithin."

"Your ancestors of the time of Moses," said I, (smiling at my old friend's eagerness to inspire me with due veneration for the antiquity of his race,) "seem to have moved about the world as easily and as rapidly as our modern travellers do by steam. And what could induce the sons of Milesius to leave the fine possessions you say they had in Spain, and come to Ireland?"

"The same reason that sends those poor people you see crowded into yonder vessel, to New South Wales," said my friend, rather nettled by my incredulous smile. "Sheer famine, want of the necessaries of life for an overflowing po-

pulation. And the reason of their turning their faces towards Ireland was that Caicer, a Druid, a famous prophet among them, had foretold they would be possessed of the most western island in Europe.

“ Well,” said I, wishing to humour the old man’s fancy, “ you never told me what you promised about the beautiful De—de—what was her name ?”

“ Devorgoil ! no ; but I have been thinking there is another event you would like to know something of, which comes before that. And in this the lady’s bright eyes were no way in fault. On the contrary, the lovely Morling was the cause of great good to her country.

“ Morling was the daughter of Mac Eoachan, king of Ulster, a prince who distinguished himself in the wars against the Danes. At that time, the beginning of the tenth century, these barbarous Danes had obtained possession of the country round Dublin ; and under the rule of their king, Sitric, had fortified that capital, and often made destructive incursions into the adjoining provinces. Sitric, the Dane, having

heard of the wonderful beauty of Morling, was desirous of obtaining her for his wife. He made several unsuccessful attempts against the capital of her father, the king of Ulster ; but succeeded in ravaging the province, and destroying some other towns belonging to the king.

“ At last, he proposed a treaty of peace with Mac Eoachan, on condition of receiving the hand of the Princess Morling. This proposal was very perplexing to the king of Ulster.

“ Compassion for his suffering subjects urged him to embrace the offer of peace, particularly as he could get no assistance from Dunchad, the king of all Ireland, against the invading Danes. On the other hand, he recoiled from the idea of giving his beautiful daughter to such a barbarian. Besides, he half suspected that her affections were already bestowed upon her cousin, the valiant prince of Cashel, who had been brought up with her in his own palace. This young prince had a claim to the crown of Munster, in right of his father, and he had lately gone to

try and wrest his dominions from the usurper who had seized on them during his minority.

“ He had not indeed declared his love to the beautiful Morling, nor demanded her in marriage; but her father well knew the lofty yet sensitive youth was too proud to sue for the princess till he had obtained the crown of his ancestors.

“ From day to day the king of Ulster delayed to send an answer to Sitric. He felt that duty to his numerous children, as well as people, should urge him to make peace with the powerful Dane, who threatened to exterminate his whole race, and make the fair Morling his slave, if he refused to bestow her on him in marriage.

“ But how could he disclose the sad alternative to his beloved daughter?—how could he willingly surrender his favourite child to the barbarian chief, and destroy all those ardent yet silent hopes which he well knew dwelt in her heart, and were entwined round the image of her absent cousin?

“ At one moment he thought of sending to the valiant Keallachan, to ask his assistance

against the Dane ; but then he felt unwilling to draw him, and the few subjects who had adhered to his cause, away from their country, at a moment when the fate of his inheritance was yet undecided.

“ Soon the perplexed king of Ulster received another and still more haughty message from Sitric ; and in an agony of contending feelings, he disclosed the whole state of the case to Morling ; and after an earnest appeal to her generosity, and a touching account of the sufferings of his people, left her full permission to decide her own fate.

“ He read but too plainly on the agonized countenance of his child, that her heart was devoted to her cousin : he saw too well, that she would prefer death to a hateful union with the Danish tyrant.

“ But Morling said not a word of this : she had been taught to revere her father’s wishes as something too sacred to question for a moment, to prefer in all things the good of her family to her own gratification ; and she was touched at

the kindness of that father in allowing her to dispose of her own fate.

“ She asked, however, one hour for reflection. This hour was passed in prayer—for the Irish were now Christians, and I hope we shall see that they were not unworthy of their name.

“ Morling retired to the chapel where she had first learnt to adore her God, and knelt at that altar where she had so often prayed with all those who were near and dear to her. One image rose above the rest, unbidden to her mind, perhaps the dearest of them all: the image of him who, many a delightful day-dream had whispered, might one day plight his faith to her at that very altar.

“ But strengthened by prayer, Morling banished the fatal enchantment of this idea. She relinquished all thoughts of becoming the bride of her cousin, yet breathed for him one petition, that God would enable him to bear the disappointment.

“ A truly ingenuous heart knows, without the assistance of much reflection from the head, where duty lies. A sound and untainted spirit

feels that the path of virtue is not that which appears most captivating. Morling saw that the fate of her dear father, as well as all her beloved family, hung upon her decision; the God to whom she had applied in the first burst of sorrow, enabled her to fulfil her task without a murmur.

“Never had Morling appeared so beautiful as when, after that decisive hour, she returned to the apartment of her father; never had her melodious voice sounded so sweet and tender as when its faltering accents whispered in his ear her full consent to become the bride of Sitric. Yet king Mac Eoachan shuddered as he embraced the darling of his soul, and his heart sank when he looked on the delicate form of the lovely victim.

“Without trusting himself to speak, he penned the fatal despatch that sealed her fate, and immediately consigned it to Sitric’s messenger.

“The next day brought the haughty Dane to the palace. The descriptions they had heard of the ferocity and deformity of his appearance had

not been exaggerated ; and bitterly did the king of Ulster repent having given his heart's darling to such a monster.

“ But the courage of Morling did not fail. Pale indeed was she, and trembling as a water lily, when she knelt with him at the altar, and pronounced the irrevocable words. Yet 'twas with a smile mingled with her tears that she bade adieu to her sorrowing family ; and with many a fervent prayer that the sacrifice she cheerfully made for their happiness, would not be in vain.

“ Sitric departed with his bride, after making many professions of friendship and alliance to her father.

“ He conducted her to his castle in Dublin, where the intelligence soon reached her, that her cousin Keallachan had succeeded in obtaining possession of his kingdom of Munster.

“ Sitric was furious at this news ; and from his preparations for defence, Morling soon perceived that he expected an attack from this prince, now the most powerful in Ireland. Poor Morling could not avoid reflecting, that had she but

waited, her cousin might have been able to deliver her father out of his difficult position with the Danes.

“There are few sufferings so intense as the conviction that our dearest hopes have been sacrificed in vain; and this the unfortunate princess was destined to feel in its full bitterness.

“She had also failed in the immediate object which had induced her to stifle all feelings towards her cousin, and give herself up to the barbarian. On pretence that her father had favoured the claims of Keallachan to Munster, Sitric again declared war against him, and in spite of the tears and entreaties of his wife, left Dublin to ravage her devoted country with fire and sword.

“In a short time Sitric returned, after having obtained a complete victory over his enemies, in which engagement the king of all Ireland was killed, and his army cut to pieces, on the 15th day of September, 919. With savage exultation the cruel Dane informed her of this, adding that in the same battle, the king, her father, was slain.

CHAPTER II.

“ There was in the castle of Dublin, a beautiful Danish princess, named Clotilda, half-sister to Sitric, but as unlike him as day is to night.

“ The object of Clotilda’s life seemed to be an unceasing endeavour to counteract the ill effect of her brother’s tyranny ; and in this harsh moment of agony and distress, she endeavoured to comfort the miserable Morling.

“ She felt how odious must be to her the presence of her father’s murderer ; and with the influence, which courageous goodness sometimes obtains over the wicked, she induced Sitric to leave his wife to mourn in solitude.

“ Sitric was too much elated by success to bestow any attention to the lamentation of his wife, and resolved to seize on this moment, when the Irish were panic-struck at their late defeat, to push his conquest southward into the kingdom of young Keallachan.

“ Confident of success, he caused his wife and sister, with all the court, to be removed to the borders of Munster, that they might be ready to

grace his triumphal entry into Cashel, the capital of his rival Keallachan.

“Poor Morling scarcely knew where she was going ; but accompanied by Clotilda, suffered herself to be transported at her husband’s will ; —all interest in this life had fled for ever,—she had nothing to hope, and almost nothing to fear.

“I say almost, because I cannot but think, however much her conscience might have condemned it, she must have felt some wish that Keallachan would retrieve the fortunes of his country, and revenge her father’s death.

“But there appeared no probability of such an event, as the present king of Ireland was said to favour the Danes, and had joined Sitric in his attack on Keallachan’s dominions in Munster.

“Every day brought some new account of Sitric’s conquests, and many were the boisterous rejoicings and the blasphemous mirth of those feasts in which his victories were celebrated. At these poor Morling was obliged to appear, and witness scenes which, in the refined court of her father, had never polluted her eyes.

“Clotilda shrank from these unholy orgies ; but she loved her brother, and was well aware

of the influence she could at times exercise over his rough nature, and therefore did not thwart him unnecessarily. She knew that her presence was a restraint on the license of his followers, and therefore never refused to check it by her presence.

“The Danish camp had now advanced near Cashel, and they were in daily expectation of the capture of that capital of Munster. Every instant Morling expected to hear of the final defeat of her cousin—of the only being, except Clotilda, who shed any light over her darkened world.

“Clotilda was aware of her dear sister-in-law’s relationship to Keallachan, and often had they talked together of that noble prince. Morling mentioned him in terms of that sisterly affection which had now succeeded her former warmer feelings ; for our dames of old were like those of the present day, the most devoted wives on the face of our earth, and though Sitric had basely betrayed her country, and deprived her of her father, she felt bound to honour and obey, even if she could not love him.

“But it was a pleasure to find that Clotilda admired the rare qualities of the young hero, and the only consolation she experienced was, to see the interest his name excited in the beautiful Dane. Morling had described his appearance so accurately, that Clotilda quite felt she knew him, and she saw her friend tremble when the dangers Keallachan encountered were mentioned.

“One day the camp was left with but few guards, as the troops had been drawn off for a grand attempt to surprise the city of Cashel. Morling and Clotilda passed the day in an agony of suspense; a thousand contending wishes agitated their bosoms. At one moment Clotilda feared lest her brother’s rashness should cause him to be slain; while the next she trembled at the vengeance his sanguinary nature might inflict on the brave Keallachan, if that hero should fall into his hands. Sometimes a vague hope that the King of Munster might be taken prisoner would dawn in her mind. And—but there is no end to the hopes and fears of a romantic young princess who has never yet seen the being

she could like, yet fancies that he exists, and allows her imagination to adorn a stranger with all manner of perfections ; and no end to surmises when two fair young dames talk together of such like subjects. An affectionate heart like that of Morling, was not likely to rest satisfied till the love she might no longer feel for Keallachan was transferred to the bosom of her friend, to say nothing of the visions of peace to her devoted country, which would flit before her when she contemplated the possibility of Keallachan's being taken, and an alliance effected between the hostile parties.

“ During this day, so likely to be decisive of the fate of Keallachan, did these two lovely ones many times mount the nearest height, and strain their eyes to see if any messenger approached.

“ It was late; the sun had sunk behind the mountains, and soon all became indistinct on earth; the clouds chased each other over the bright moon; the wind howled among the old oaks; yet still they gazed and listened with breathless anxiety. Morling started and trembled as the shadows flitted by, and fancied she

heard, mingled with the wind's wild roar, a cry like that of the Banshee of her house.

"At last, a distant shout was heard—nearer and nearer it comes; it is the cry of victory. Morling's heart sank; then reproaching herself for want of sympathy with her husband's success, she endeavoured to smile, and prepared to welcome his approach. Louder and louder grows the clang of armour, and the tramp of steeds, and soon they see a dark line of cavalry surround the camp.

" 'Where is the princess Morling?' enquires a well-known voice, but it is not that of her husband. It was like the music of childhood and the breath of home, to the ears of Morling, yet she trembled and clung for support to the sister of her spouse.

"Clotilda was too much horror-struck at finding the warriors which surrounded them were not her brother's troops, to perceive the embarrassment of Morling.

" 'Fear not,' said the same melodious voice; 'the wife and sister of Sitric are as safe in the hand of the Irish, as in their own palace halls.'"

“In another moment, the Princesses found themselves placed in litters, and borne swiftly along. On they flew, with a speed like that of the dark clouds which flitted across the sky; and the horses’ hoofs, and the clang of armour, was louder than the wind roaring amid the rocks. At first it was so dark, and their surprise and agitation were so great, they could not see or comprehend any thing. But gradually the speed of the horses slackened, the storm abated, and the clear, tranquil moon emerged from her dark bed of clouds, and flung her silvery rays upon the river and the buildings of the town of Cashel. Morling looked out from the veil in which she had wrapped herself, and her face was pale, yet lovely as the bright moon above. She saw the troops around were men of her own dear land, and her heart bounded, as she beheld the arms and banners of her race—but all wore strange features, and he whose voice she had heard was not among them.

“The river is past, and they enter the dark gate-way. The clang of armour resounds through the narrow street. The inhabitants of

the town meet them with joyful acclamations, and the song of the bards, of troops of young girls, clad in white, each bearing a harp in her hand, * whose business it was to

“ Applaud the valiant, and the base control,
Disturb, exalt, enchant the human soul.”

“ ‘Long live Keallachan, the bravest of the brave!’ resounds through the clear night air.

“ At the palace gate they stop, and it is the hand of Prince Keallachan himself assists Morling to dismount. ‘A hundred thousand welcomes to Munster,’ says a low trembling voice. Can it be that of the valiant, the brave prince, her cousin? He leaves her before she has time to determine, and seems fully engrossed in endeavours to reassure the terrified Clotilda.

* “When armies returned in triumph, from foreign wars, or domestic contentions, troops of virgins, clad in white, each bearing a small harp in her hand, advanced with tripping step, to meet them with congratulatory songs.”

Walker's Irish Bards.

In this, as in many other customs of the ancient Irish, may be traced a resemblance to the usages of the Jews, the songs of Miriam, Deborah, &c.

“With chivalrous respect he leads that Princess to the state apartment, while one of his followers conducts Morling. There he was about to leave them with only the female attendants to minister to their comfort, when, as if in answer to the unuttered question depicted on the anxious countenances of the captives, Keallachan said, while he gazed on the fair Clotilda, ‘Lady, your brother is safe; he was seen retreating with a small remnant of his troops to the North.’

“Clotilda thanked him with a sweet smile for his considerate intelligence, and Morling was touched by the thoughtful delicacy which had prompted him to address the sister of Sitric rather than herself. Her generous nature beheld too, with pleasure, the admiration with which Keallachan gazed on Clotilda.

“That Princess was indeed lovely; and it was a loveliness as different from that of our Irish beauties, who are the dark children of the South, as the mild rays of morning sun are from the glowing beams of noon-day splendor.

“The Danish princess was a genuine daughter of the north; over her snowy brow waved light

tresses of golden hair. Her clear blue eye was soft, yet mirthful as the azure sky, when it is reflected in the glittering waters. And now, when she felt that the eyes of that prince of whom she had so often thought were upon her—

“ When she perceived he viewed her so,
Her colour, it did come and go;
Vermilion—and then winter snow—
Her blushing cheeks did ebb and flow.”

“ Perhaps Keallachan saw her embarrassment; or may be, he wished to look once more on his unfortunate cousin, who stood near, like a drooping flower that had been blighted in its bloom—the shadow of her former self.

“ ‘ Ladies, I bid you farewell,’ he said, and his last look was one of deep sadness, directed towards Morling.

“ Clotilda was lost in surprise at the magnificence of their apartment, and the respectful courtesy with which they were treated. She had seen nothing so splendid since she had left the court of her father, king of Denmark; nor

ever beheld so handsome and gentle a youth as Prince Keallachan.

“Few were the words exchanged between the Princesses that evening—each was full of thought and wonder; and the young King, whose merits had hitherto furnished such a never-dying theme of discourse when absent, now, that they were under his very roof, seemed by their voices to be forgotten.

“But see,” said my old friend, interrupting himself, “yonder mountain is putting on his night-cap, as we say in these parts, when the grey clouds begin to gather over its hoary head. The dew, too, is beginning to fall—the convent bells are ringing for evening prayer, and my story is not half told yet. We had better put off the rest till to-morrow.”

CHAPTER III.

To-morrow came, and the old man resumed his story.

“Many and splendid were the fêtes and tournaments given by the king of Munster, to cele-

brate his signal victory over the Danes, and in honor of his royal captives. Weeks were past in the enjoyment of all the pleasures of that refined court, where the cultivation of the arts, and the skill of the bards, shed a charm to which the captive princesses were little accustomed in the camp of the barbarous Danes.

“But at the end of a month, a deputation came to Cashel from Sitric, who had received fresh supplies of gold and troops from Denmark, to offer a ransom for his wife and sister. Keallachan, though with many heartfelt regrets, at the thoughts of losing the brightest ornaments of his court, felt bound to consent to their liberation. The princesses, attended by a brilliant escort, departed for Dublin; but what were their reflections, or the feelings of their hearts during the journey, tradition does not say.

“It is known, however, that Sitric received his wife and sister with great kindness, and made the latter relate all that had occurred during their captivity; that he appeared much flattered and pleased by the courteous treatment they had received from Keallachan; and in

turn informed them of his own prosperity, and the favor he enjoyed with the king of Ireland. Clotilda was delighted to hear her brother speak so joyfully of the prospect of peace, as his restless spirit seemed hitherto to live only in war and tumult.

“What her feelings were, when on the next day he informed her of his intention of sending a brilliant deputation to Keallachan, for the purpose of concluding a lasting peace, which was to be ratified by the bestowal of her own hand on the king of Munster, I shall not attempt to describe. All I know is, that, perhaps to hide her blushes at the mention of this projected marriage, she hurried out of the room, and ran to bury her lovely face in the bosom of her sister-in-law, and to confide to her affectionate ear all the hopes, wishes, and fears which agitated her.

“Morling heard her, without testifying much surprise; but a damask hue mounted to her cheek for a moment, and then left it paler than before. She appeared lost in thought; then with a firm and determined air, she quitted Clotilda, and sought her husband’s presence—with

unwonted energy, she upbraided him for a want of spirit in offering his sister, a Princess of the royal house of Denmark, to a petty prince of Ireland. She shewed him, how much beneath his dignity it was, to sue to the man who had so lately been his enemy; and now, at a time when fortune favored the Danes, to cringe thus to a king, who had defeated them so ingloriously, forced them to retire in disgrace, and taken his relations captive.

“ Sitric seemed struck by her observations; it was not his wont to confide any of his cunning designs to his wife; yet when he saw her enter so warmly into his cause, he was thrown off his guard. To escape from her importunity, and the reproach she cast upon his want of courage, with earnest injunctions to secrecy, even from Clotilda, he informed her that he had not the remotest intention of giving his beautiful sister to the hateful Keallachan; on the contrary, his only view was, by fair promises to allure him within his power; the moment he had accomplished which, he would devote his incautious enemy to destruction.

“Morling appeared somewhat reconciled by this disclosure to the idea of sending the message of peace and alliance to Keallachan, and on hearing that the messengers were already despatched, she hastened away, to prepare, as she said, the mind of Clotilda to receive her supposed bridegroom with becoming respect.

“Yet few, in reality, were the words she addressed to Clotilda on that important subject ; and an absent listener indeed did she prove to all the surmises and conjectures which that princess addressed to her ear.

“Often, during that evening and the following day, did Morling gaze on the slowly-moving shadows, which, in those remote ages, were the only means they had to reckon the hours.

“If Keallachan should accept the terms proposed by Sitric, it was supposed he would arrive in Dublin the following evening.

“As each hour passed away, the agitation of Clotilda increased, and she was at this trying moment deprived of the society of the only being who could read and enter into all the feelings of her breast.

“Morling complained of illness, and after wishing her friends an affectionate good night, entreated them not to expect her to appear early the following morning; she then retired to her own room.

“But it was not to sleep, or even to rest for a moment, though her weary frame and anxious heart much required repose, that Morling left her sister and husband. She indeed allowed her maids to take off her silken robes—”

“Her mantle green, inwrought with gold—” •

* That silk dresses were used in Ireland as early as the tenth century, is confirmed by the “Hervarra Saga,” a book in old Icelandic, which, in giving an account of a celebrated combat, mentions that one of the warriors had procured from Ireland a silk garment, impenetrable to any weapon. This battle took place, according to the historian Juhm, A.D. 410. *Herbert on Icelandic Poetry*, vol. i. pp. 74, 93.

Beaufort in his *Antiquities of Ireland* says, when speaking of silk, “This luxury, it is evident, was one indulged in by the Irish, and continued to be so until 1537, when silk embroidered vests and kirtles were prohibited by act of Parliament. But so wedded to the use of silk were the “naked Irishry,” as the calumnious Moryson unblushingly calls them, that in 1596, Spenser enumerates silken fillets as one of the common parts of dress; and at that time silk was a very costly article.

and, with many expressions of extreme suffering and fatigue, quickly dismissed them.

“As soon as she heard the last footstep die away in the distant corridor, Morling rose from her bed ; and taking down a large wolf-skin of Sitric’s, wrapped it round her slender form, and placed on her head a hunting-cap, which effectually concealed the glossy braids of her raven hair, and overshadowed her delicate features.

“Softly she opened the door, and glided down a stair-case which conducted to the garden.

“The night was dark as pitch, yet her nimble steps traversed confidently the alleys of the garden, and part of the town ; and she was ten miles north of Dublin, when the dew first felt her foot in the morning.

“A few countrymen, carrying their provisions to the Danish camp in Dublin, were the only living things, save the night-owl and the bat, that she met during the weary way. But with the flight of night—when the sun began to warm the mountain-tops, and kiss the sparkling waves of the eastern sea, a stately cavalcade met the eyes of Morling. ’Twas now, and only now, she felt

her frame was weary, and for the first time perceived that her feet were wounded with the mountain path. Yet, before she sank exhausted on the ground, she called loudly on the advancing host.

“The quick ear of Keallachan heard the sweet voice of his cousin; and, galloping forward, he was at her side in an instant. ‘Fly—return—you are betrayed,’ she exclaimed, in breathless haste. ‘Nay, lose not a moment,’ she continued, with frantic vehemence, on seeing that he was more horror-struck by her pale countenance and sinking frame than at the words of warning she uttered.

“‘Go—leave me, I implore you by the memory of my murdered father, by our happy childhood, by—Oh, Keallachan! do not waste these precious moments: hark! they come; see the cloud of dust in the north.’

And leave you—my cousin, my—to the fury of that wretch who murdered all your race? I will go; but you must return with me,’ he continued, preparing to lift her on his war-horse.

“‘Never,’ exclaimed she; and with the

strength of unshrinking virtue, she disengaged herself from him, and with a look of mingled entreaty and command, motioned him away with her hand. Keallachan respected her motive, and obeyed. She stood fixed to the spot, and with straining eyes rivetted on the cavalcade till it disappeared behind the mountain; then raised them with a fervent burst of thanks to heaven—clasped her hands in prayer—and sank senseless on the ground.

“Long did Morling remain in a state of stupor; and was only at last roused to consciousness by the loud din of war, and fearful tramp of steeds.

“When she raised her weary head, and languidly opened her eyes, the whole scene appeared like the fulfilment of some horrible dream. That which she had too often dreaded—the drama of horror on which her vivid imagination had often dwelt—the sounds of strife which had continually haunted her dreams, were now in horrible reality before her. In the plain below she saw, first with doubting terror, and then too dreadful certainty, Keallachan and her husband

engaged in mortal combat. Around them were the Danes and Irish, fighting with all the dire animosity which treachery and revenge could inspire.

“Now, O joy! the green banner prevails; the colour of her people, her country, her father’s house, is victorious: the Danes give way. Now the combatants disappear behind a rock; and Morling mounts to a higher spot, from whence they are again visible to her straining gaze. Sitric is combating with desperate valour—he pushes forward—and oh, horror! another party of furious Danes close upon the rear of the Irish—they are surrounded on all sides. With the energy of despair, Keallachan and his brave followers endeavour to penetrate the dense mass of spears. Each valiant Irishman makes a gap before him: heaps of Danes encumber the ground. By the side of Keallachan, and foremost in the fight, Morling recognises Dunchan, the young prince of Thomond, whom she had known during her captivity at Cashel. It was his father who had usurped the sovereignty of Munster, during Keallachan’s minority, but he had been so charmed with the

brave conduct of the young rightful heir, that he had voluntarily abandoned his pretensions to the crown, and become one of his warmest friends and most zealous supporters. With him had Keallachan in his absence left the government of of his province; and now his son, the brave Dunchan, is wielding his powerful weapon to save the king of Munster.

“But the Irish were few in comparison to the Danes; though every Milesian battle-axe hewed down hosts of enemies, yet the dead were constantly replaced. Morling saw fresh numbers pouring in from all sides, which shewed her that Sitric had prepared with but too fatal skill for the entanglement of his enemy. Then the dresses of the unfortunate Irish were but ill calculated for war; they had come on a mission of peace and joy, to escort, rather than protect, their beloved prince on his nuptial expedition. The Danes, on the contrary, were protected by thick hides and skins of leather, besides being armed with huge pointed shields.

“Morling’s anxious gaze discerned all these disadvantages under which her kinsmen labour-

ed, and every moment she expected to see them fall. Yet still they fought on with undaunted bravery, though the little band grew smaller every moment. The horse of Keallachan is killed—the hero sinks. Morling loses sight of his waving plume. All objects swim in indistinct masses before her agonized gaze. Dunchan, too, has disappeared; and Morling can see no more. Again, exhausted, she falls on the cold rock. Soon the din of war grows fainter. The living have left the battle-field. The chill breath of evening blows freshly on Morling's brow; while it rouses her wearied spirits, it seems to whisper to her heart that all is not yet over, she has still a duty—still a task to perform. Is he dead—is the last of her kinsmen departed to the land of souls?—there is yet daylight to shew the heaps of dead upon the plain; and Morling—

“She hurried o’er the battle-field,
With anxious look and fearful tread,
Compressed her lips—her bosom steel’d,
To meet those heaps of ghastly dead;
Her gentle eye, ill-used, I ween,
To brook the horrors of such a scene.

• • • • •

“ ’Tis silence all ! above—around
The scattered slain are lying,
Save when the wind, with wailing sound,
Their lonely dirge is sighing,
’Mid plumes that on the warrior’s crest
Danced lightly as his youthful breast ;
Save where a hollow, broken tone,
Bespeaks some hero’s dying groan.

“ On, on she moves—her straining eye
Bent wildly on each blood-stain’d face,
As ’mid those heaps that mingled lie,
Some well-known lineaments to trace ;
All heedless of the slippery gore,
Her soul had sickened at before.”

“ He is not there. Can he have escaped ? She clings to the joyful idea ; and now that her heart is in some measure reassured, she remembers that Clotilda will be uneasy at her prolonged absence ; that, alas ! Sitric, the perfidious, the base, is he whom she is bound to honour and obey. To him she must return ; and having acted towards her cousin as humanity and early affection dictated, and endeavoured to save his life, she returned to Dublin.

“ But grief dwelt in her heart, and weariness in her frame ; so it was late, or rather early morning, before she reached the castle of her lord. So great had been the confusion attendant upon the battle and preparations to surprise the unsuspecting Keallachan, that no one but Clotilda had perceived her absence ; and Morling was able to enter the castle, and change her dress, without observation. And Clotilda, too, had in the evening been diverted from thinking of Morling’s absence by the triumphant return of her brother, and the arrival of Keallachan, not as her betrothed husband, but in chains as a captive. She saw him pass the portal, and heard that with Dunchan he was thrown into the lowest dungeon of the castle. Her sad heart and trembling voice had now to inform the wearied Morling of this new misfortune. And now that Keallachan was in danger and distress, did these two affectionate spirits give vent to the interest they both felt for the brave chief. Now did Morling plainly see that the life of her dear sister-in-law was bound up in that of her cousin. And now might Clo-

tilda have discovered how more than sisterly was the love of Morling for her kinsman. But the wife of Sitric soon repressed her burning tears, and stifled the rising sigh. 'Go,' said she; 'go, throw yourself at the feet of your brother, and kiss the hem of his tunic, and entreat for the life of the prince whose wife you were destined to be.'

"Clotilda started up from the ground, where she had fallen in grief, and flung back the long tresses of her golden hair: 'Come,' said she, we will go together; you, too, must plead for your beloved kinsman.'

"Morling felt reluctant, she scarcely knew why, to sue for the life of the lover of her youth.

"But a moment's consideration shewed her the folly of hesitating, when the existence of a human being was at stake; and she prepared to accompany Clotilda to the apartment of Sitric.

"He was not there: he had gone with savage exultation to feast his eyes with the sight of the unfortunate victims. There he stood in the dark loathsome prison, where a torch had been

brought, not to dispel the dreary darkness which surrounded them, but to enable the tyrant to triumph over the reverse of fortune of the bravest prince in Ireland.

“Chained to the ground, and pierced with numerous wounds, lay the mighty Keallachan ; yet his noble features wore a more cheerful aspect than those of the Danish chief, for the Christian prince looked with confidence to a glorious hereafter, while the countenance of the pagan Sitric, seemed, even in the flush of triumph and gratified vengeance, to be impressed with the stamp of everlasting tortures. His thick lip curled with a satanic smile, while the deep-set grey eye was already livid with a spark of that hell-fire which is never quenched.

“Long did those eyes gloat over the prostrate hero, while his uncouth arm was half outstretched, as he bent towards Keallachan, with his dagger pointed to the heart of the prince. Nearer and nearer did the longing hand approach, yet Keallachan stirred not, his heroic countenance flinched not at the murderous weapon. His lips did not supplicate for life, but his eyes, upturned towards heaven, al-

ready beamed with fervent hope of grace, the sure and certain prospect of blissful immortality.

“ Sitric frowned with rage, when he saw this look of peaceful confidence ; his vengeance was unsatisfied—he felt that to Keallachan death would be gain ; foiled and disappointed, he slowly drew away his murderous arm. Another scheme of vengeance was boiling in his dark mind. ‘ Your life may yet be saved,’ he said, with affected clemency ; ‘ you have only to send a mandate to your subjects, and command them to deliver into my hands the cities of Cashel, Cork, Limerick, and Waterford.’

“ ‘ Never !’ exclaimed Keallachan. ‘ You may take my life, but you cannot enchain my will. The spirit of Keallachan will survive in his successor. The father of this brave youth, the noble Kennedy, who relinquished the throne of Munster to oblige me, will now, under the blessing of Christ, keep it to revenge my death. Tremble, proud husband of my kinswoman, and make your peace with God, for your hours are numbered.’

"Sitric saw that nothing could bend the noble spirit of his vanquished foe, and after a menace that he should not have the satisfaction of being buried in his native land, but be sent to expire in a dungeon in Norway, he sullenly withdrew.

"At the door of the outer prison, he saw the drooping forms of his wife and sister, who had vainly endeavoured to force their way into the inner cell. They both feared that all was over, yet dreaded to hear the worst. Clotilda was the first to break the terrible silence, and throwing herself at the feet of Sitric, implored to be allowed to visit the wretched captives.

"‘Yes, go to him,’ exclaimed Sitric, with a fiendish smile, ‘and use your influence to persuade him to send orders to deliver up his country to me : on these conditions his life may be spared. And—and tell him, that you, my sister, the daughter of Denmark’s king, will be the reward of his compliance.’

"Clotilda was so overjoyed to find he was still alive—that there was yet a hope—that she perceived not the treacherous look which

accompanied the words of her brother. Full of renewed confidence, she hastened through the prison door ; but Morling, taught by dire experience to know her husband's perfidy, only wrung her hands in hopeless woe. She did not follow Clotilda to the dungeon, but retired to pray, and anxiously awaited the return of her sister. 'Twas long before the princess came, and then her countenance was bright and full of hope. 'He has consented to send to Munster, and endeavour to persuade his subjects to ransom him, if my brother will allow one of the prisoners, his own subject, to bear the message. I have informed Sitric of this, and he has now liberated one of the brave men for the purpose, and sent him into Keallachan's dungeon. And now God grant that his subjects may obey his wishes.'

"But Morling's heart was not revived at these words ; she knew the noble spirit of her cousin too well, to think for a moment he would recommend a surrender so destructive to his people. She felt sure, that the real message which the liberated prisoner would carry to his subjects, would be far different from what

Clotilda supposed. But she said nothing to undeceive her sister, or crush her hopes of ultimate happiness.

“Morling was right. The message of the noble-minded prince was an earnest charge to exhort the regent Kennedy never to comply with the proposals of the Danes, or suffer any of them to enter his province, whatever might be his own fate. But on the other hand, he exhorted him to rouse his subjects to attack them with vigour, and to order the ships stationed in the harbours to sail for Dundalk, and prevent the Danish fleet from executing their base purpose of carrying himself and Dunchan to Norway.

“The news of Sitric’s treachery having quickly reached Munster, the inhabitants of that province were already in motion when the messenger arrived. Kennedy having collected his troops, the fleet was likewise drawn together, and the command of the naval armament, which consisted of seventy ships, was given to the Prince of Desmond. The army then proceeded to Connaught, where the general, levying provi-

sions for the subsistence of his troops, so much offended that provincial prince, that he sent private intelligence to the Danes of the approach of the army of Munster, and discovered all their designs.

“Sitric had reached Armagh, where he then lay waiting with his prisoners. But on the news of the Irish troops being in full march towards him, he ordered the Danish Earls to move out of the city, and come immediately to an engagement with them, whilst he, with his guard, marched towards Dundalk, in order to place his captives on board his fleet, and carry them to Norway, being more intent on the execution of his revengeful project than on the preservation of his troops. These were soon totally defeated by the enraged natives; and whilst Sitric took the road to Dundalk with his captives, the victorious Irish pursued him with all their forces. But when these latter arrived, they found the Danes had just embarked with the King of Munster, Dunchan, and the rest of their prisoners. It was in vain for them to line the shore, and menace the retreating enemy, who

were sufficiently out of their reach, and now vainly fancied themselves likewise to be out of the reach of vengeance. But in this they were mistaken; for, at this critical moment, the Irish fleet, commanded by the prince of Desmond, made its appearance, and prepared immediately for battle.

“ A sight so unexpected as this, threw Sitric and his men into great confusion; however, perceiving there was no way to escape, they began a desperate engagement, in which their superior numbers and superior skill more than once gave them a prospect of victory; for the Irish were but new in the practice of sea battles, whereas the Danes, being old pirates, were experienced navigators. Nevertheless, what the former wanted in numbers and judgment, they made up in valour and resolution. In this hard contest, the Irish Admiral sought out the vessel of the Danish General, which he boarded, in spite of all opposition. There he saw Keallachan bound to the mast. Hastening to his assistance, he quickly cut the cords, and enabled the king, whom he had thus unexpectedly rescued,

to quit the Danish, and repair immediately on board the Irish vessel.

“ This generous action, however, which saved the king, proved fatal to the gallant admiral ; for, not being supported by a sufficient number of his countrymen, he was at last overpowered and slain by the Danish guards, who, by Sitric’s order, severed his head from his body, and exposed it to the Irish, in order thereby to dishearten them. But this sight only served the more to inflame their courage. Fingall, who succeeded the slain admiral, again boarded the Danish ship, with a determined resolution to revenge the death of the prince of Desmond. This brave officer found his men so far outnumbered by the enemy, that conquest seemed impossible ; but as he valued not his own life, he found means to get that of his foe into his power ; for, forcing his way through all the fighting crowd, to Sitric, he singled him out, grasped him in his arms, and threw himself with him into the sea, where both were drowned together. Two other of the Irish chiefs, following the example, seized on Sitric’s brothers in

the like manner, and thus at once put an end to their existence, while they perished with them.

“The Danes were astonished and confounded when they saw the Irish thus, at the expense of their own lives, making sure of the destruction of their enemies; bold as they were, and accustomed to scenes of blood and slaughter, yet they were struck with dread and horror at this new mode of fighting. Besides, as they now saw their general and his brothers destroyed, the royal prisoners released, and almost everything they contended for entirely lost, they began to slacken their opposition, while the fury of the Irish still continued; and after some vain attempts to turn the fortune of the day, fell into disorder; whilst the Irish, improving their advantage, renewed their attacks with fresh vigour, till at length the Danes were put to flight, and numbers of them destroyed.

“In the meantime, Morling and Clotilda were suffering agonies of suspense. Various were the reports which had reached them, and their poor hearts had been tossed to and fro like the restless billows. At last a few wretched survivors

of the Danish army returned to Dublin, but so closely were they pursued by the victorious Irish, that it was from the lips of some of her own countrymen that Morling first heard of her husband's death, and the glorious victory of her brave cousin.

“The widow of Sitric seemed less elated at the safety of Keallachan, and the triumph of her country, than was her sister. Clotilda, whose affection for her brother had gradually diminished on discovering his base designs on the prince he had himself proposed for her husband, shed but few tears for his death : they were dried on her glowing cheek by the intelligence of Keallachan's near approach. Morling, the broken-hearted, whose spirit was long inured to woe, neither wept nor smiled at the news. Yet fervently did she return thanks to Heaven for the favour He had shewn her country, and earnestly did she pray for the soul of him with whom in life her fate had been bound.

“But she was still susceptible to joy ; and as she gazed on the blushing Clotilda, she laid her

thin hand on her sister's head, and implored the blessing of God on her union with Keallachan.

"Clotida heard the gentle prayer, and rewarded her with a look of unspeakable gratitude. But little was she aware of the extent of the sacrifice Morling was making; and perhaps, indeed, the sufferer herself knew not how with all the veins of her heart she still clung to the lover of her youth. Yet something whispered to her sensitive spirit, that she must not trust herself to see him.

"'Farewell, dearest sister,' said she; 'I am going to devote the short remnant of my days to pray for the soul of your brother—to implore the Redeemer to have mercy upon him,—may you be happy!'

"In vain Clotilda implored her to remain at least till the arrival of Keallachan. Morling resolutely persisted in her project, and that very evening breathed her vows in the convent which she had herself founded.

"The next day the victorious King of Munster arrived, and took possession of the town and castle of Dublin; but its fairest ornament—the

beloved of his youth—was gone! Clotilda, with burning blushes, gave him a letter which Morling had written to Keallachan, but the contents of which were unknown to her. The prince started as his eye ran over the characters, and the hero's cheek, which the near approach of death had never blanched, became deadly pale.

“ Was this at the thought that he should never again behold his cousin?—I cannot determine, but certain it is that he delayed not to fulfil his engagement with Clotilda. Though Sitric's perfidy did not call upon him to do this, yet he had been struck by her beauty, at a time when Morling was wedded to another, and that he had learnt to doubt whether she had ever loved him.

“ He had gladly embraced the proposal of Sitric to grant him Clotilda in marriage. Perhaps he may afterwards have been touched at the proof given by Morling of her still existing interest in his fate, on that fatal morning when he was taken prisoner. During the long captivity which followed, he may have confirmed himself in the idea that her coldness towards

him only proceeded from a sense of duty ; and on the death of Sitric he might have indulged a hope of regaining her affections—for what love is like the first? Under this impression he may have hurried to Dublin. The intelligence of her withdrawal into the irrevocable seclusion of a convent, and the letter in which she ardently implored him to ratify his engagement with Clotilda, shewed him at once the full generosity of her conduct, and the path where his duty lay.

“ As soon as the mourning for Sitric was ended, and that Keallachan felt he could with propriety approach Clotilda as a lover, he demanded her hand in marriage ; and after that event had taken place, the country enjoyed a long interval of peace.”

“ What a very unsatisfactory ending,” I exclaimed ; “ surely Morling ought to have been rewarded at last for all the sacrifices she had made.”

“ And sure she was rewarded,” said the venerable chronicler ; “ is there not a reward up there,” he added, looking towards the blue hea-

vens, "for every one who tries to do what is right?"

"But still I should have liked her noble and self-denying heroism to have been rewarded in this world," I said; "particularly where it might have been without any breach of duty on her part."

"Ah, lady," he replied, "that is the way we are all prone to reason on such subjects,—but who ever yet saw the virtuous flourish in greater prosperity than others? Indeed we are told that in this world they shall have tribulation, in order that the gold may come brighter and purer out of the furnace :—but even while passing through it, they are happier than the wicked with their hollow mirth, and they enjoy an inward peace and consolation which those who only see the outside of things cannot understand."

CHAPTER V.

Reflections on various subjects—Spectral friends and enemies.

February 5.—Most of us contrive to find in Scripture a text to prove any favorite doctrine. Some people are clever enough to discover a commandment which says “Thou shalt not dance,” for they seem to think it the most heinous sin; while another set contrives to find “Thou shalt jump;”—but, oh! let us be charitable, and not despise any faith. May God bless all sects, and all denominations of Christians; may he shed his enlightening beams on those of other religions too, and pardon those who have none!

February 28.—I have just been reading some

poems, which I find, with horror and dismay, are written by an infidel. It is rather curious that as I turn to this diary, in order to record some of the indignant feelings those poems have excited, I find the last words I wrote was a prayer that God would pardon those who have no religion. Yet I felt extremely angry with the poet; his reasoning is quite false; yet still anything of that sort is dangerous to the weak-minded and vacillating Christian. It is dreadful to think that any one who has had the advantages of education should be a disbeliever; and yet it is not strange, for knowledge and genius beget that pride of intellect which will not bow down to the mysteries of religion :—

“ ’Tis immortality decyphers man,
And opens all the mysteries of his make;
Without it, half his instincts are a riddle—
Without it, all his virtues are a dream.
His very crimes attest his dignity.
His sateless thirst of pleasure, gold, and fame,
Declares him born for blessings infinite :
Man’s misery alone declares him born for bliss,
Nothing this world unriddles but the next.”

YOUNG’S NIGHT THOUGHTS.

“ De sa propre splendeur Dieu se voile à la terre,
Et ce n'est qu'à travers la nuit et le mystère
Que l'œil peut voir le jour, l'homme la vérité.”

Yet it seems wonderful that the mind of a real poet—of a being so alive to the beauties of nature, should have been totally insensible to the beauty of our Christian revelation, and the sublime sentiments it contains. What a mist of prejudice must have blinded him, that he neither saw, nor felt, nor was touched by the truth and divinity which breathes in every word of our glorious Scriptures—those scriptures of which de la Martine says,

“ Deux mille ans epuisant leurs sagesses frivoles
N'ont pu dementir une de tes paroles.”

Sir Thomas Browne says in his *Religio Medici*: “There are two books from which I collect my divinity—besides that written one of God, another of his servant, Nature; that universal and public manuscript that lies expanded unto the eyes of all: those that never saw him in the one, have discovered him in the other.”

“There is something very awful,” says Milton, “in the thought of what incalculable good or evil may be done by one single book. Books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a progeny of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are ; nay, they do preserve, as in a vial, the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively and as vigorously productive as those fabulous dragon’s teeth ; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men.” In another place he writes, “Many a man lives a burden to the earth ; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life,”

The quantity we have to learn, and know, and remember, encreases fearfully every year. We have the learning and poetry of the ancient Greeks and Romans, we have the writings and poetry of the middle ages—those splendid works in English, Italian and Spanish, then

we have the immense field of more modern German and French literature, to say nothing of our own! Even in this present generation, what multitudes of good or powerful writers have sprung up. Yet one single head, one short life, is expected to learn the best of all this accumulated knowledge, acquired by different nations and languages, during nearly six thousand years. Yes, we expect ourselves, our children, and those who instruct them, to do this.

Great care should then be taken to read only the best books, and receive the most useful impressions; otherwise, instead of profiting, that is, becoming better and happier from this accumulated learning, our heads will only contain a jumble of everything, and our best feelings will be frittered away.


It seems to me that in proportion as we are endowed with strong reasoning powers, our instincts are less perfect. Most things are thus wisely distributed. Those whose inclinations are

naturally good, have in general but little power over themselves ; there is less necessity for being guided by reason, and they have generally not strong reasoning powers. Those, on the contrary, who have powerful intellects, are, I think, apt to have wrong and bad feelings ; which, as the mind is disposed, they are able with more or less difficulty to restrain. But theirs is a life of warfare, though keenly alive to the beautiful and good. And perhaps as their path is difficult, their reward will be greater. I think we see this in countries. The impulses or instincts of the Irish are very superior to ours ; they are more affectionate, kind, and unselfish ; but then they have but little power over their feelings, and are thus apt to be easily led astray.

A French gentleman said to-day he thought the generality of English women more frivolous, more devoted to the world and dissipation, than the French. I have often heard it asserted, that the conversation of French women is more in-

tellectual, that they are more accustomed to converse on interesting and important subjects than the English. This is very natural in a country where conversational powers and agreeability in society are so much esteemed. But the imputation of the frivolity of English women excited to-day great indignation among the Englishmen present. My idea is that we are more frivolous than we used to be—more than the last generation. There is a passion for society now afloat which destroys our old genuine domestic feelings. Our homes, our country places, are deserted, and I never can forgive us for this.

A multitude of thoughts, impressions, and feelings are not conducive to poetry; this may be one reason why barbarous nations are more poetic than civilized ones. The quick flow of thought arising from high cultivation and extensive knowledge, prevents that exclusive dwelling on one idea which is requisite to produce good



poetry, and the same over-cultivation produces an impatience in reading it.

I think the principal ingredient of genius is a sort of intuitive power of seizing on the most effectual mode of producing impression on the minds of others. It is this feeling, rather than reflection, which makes most of the great geniuses of the present day write in prose. Quickness is what extreme cultivation most relishes. The same feeling, therefore, which produces railroads, steam-carriages, and all kinds of quick-performing machines, is inimical to the slow measured cadences of verse.

When we like a person at first sight, the affection generally proceeds from a sort of instinctive conviction that they will make us happy. We feel that their qualities harmonize with ours, though they may be very different, and are composed of those which we want most. As harmony produced by unisons is not the most attractive, so characters similarly moulded do not generally suit, and conduce least to

each other's happiness. It is owing to this that we see melancholy people generally attracted by those of a cheerful temper. But the contrast must not be too strong, or it might produce discord ; they should not be in different keys.

How delightful are those moments when we have a full perception of all we have to be thankful for!—when all our life, both past and future, seems to resemble some bright and sunlit landscape—when even the shadows which diversify its surface, only tend to vivify and embellish the scene ! Sometimes, when in this rare but blessed frame of mind, I can fancy the landscape of life will appear more beautiful still, when clad in autumnal hues ; and even when covered with the frost and snows of winter, it will look cheering. And further still, I can imagine that, when we have passed through the winter of old age, and the cold dark tomb has closed over us, a radiant heaven is on the other side, far more lovely than the earthly landscape—the eternal abode of harmony and peace.

We can comprehend more easily the infinity of time and space than that there should be any limit to either. We can comprehend eternity better than annihilation. This shews that we are designed for a future existence and a larger sphere—that we are immortal.

Disappointments are not half so bad in themselves as is the bitter lesson which they teach. They tell us not to indulge in hope, and hope is in this life our only real enjoyment. We should never check the joyful anticipations and buoyant hopes of sanguine-minded children ; let them have all the pleasure of expecting to find this world a paradise. This delightful imagination will perhaps be their only earthly happiness ; let it therefore last as long as possible.

The tender affection of the good may have an additional charm in giving a fancied security against evil. Whilst we receive evident proofs of their love, when we know that we are every thing to even one really good person, we feel as if no

great evil could assail us, because, if we were miserable, that delightful friend must suffer.

It has often struck me, that when we are in a state of mind particularly happy or miserable, we seem especially linked with those portions of our lives, in which we have been either the one or the other ; and they are brought so prominently forward, that they give a color to the whole. When happy, though the remembrance of past suffering remains, yet it is so softened down by the impression of happiness, thus vividly brought before the mind, as to be almost forgotten ; and on the other hand, when unhappy, the whole existence seems to have been wretched. This feeling enables me to imagine the possibility, that we may enjoy perfect happiness in the next world, and yet retain recollection of all that happened in this, even anxiety for the fate of those we loved ; since the painful feelings may be tempered and subdued, just as past sorrow, though remembered in joy,

can but slightly embitter our moments of happiness here below.

I think that we may live many years, and that some even pass through their whole lives, without experiencing any real joy ; others, perhaps, without a feeling of real sorrow. Many are born without any natural taste for happiness, at least for doing those things which tend to the good, either of themselves or others ; they seem to live quite by chance : such persons, if they do not die young, usually commit suicide, or go mad. It will generally be found, that those who attain a great age, have had through life a wish and determination to live long ; and they have in some degree studied the manner to attain this object.

How much time and happiness vanity makes us lose ? A longing for praise, often induces us to neglect the enjoyment of a thousand little simple pleasures, which most days afford.

How sad it is, that we seldom value what we possess ; many of us do not learn to prize the advantages of youth, till old age arrives ! Then our object is, to be thought young, and we then disregard the advantages which age, and experience, and knowledge ought to afford. We thus lose our *fast going* time in fruitless endeavours to ape the manners, and look, which when they naturally belonged to us we disregarded ! Shall we ever be wise ?—and will all our own experience, and that of others, ever fit us for the perfect state we all hope to attain in another world ?

In dealing with mankind, let us always calculate upon their good, rather than their bad qualities, and we shall generally find ourselves to be right. I do not say this, because it is the most benevolent and charitable view to take of human nature, or because I am disposed to view things in their most favourable light, for the contrary is the fact ; but I give it as the result of many years experience and anxious thought.

This affords no ground for the supposition which some entertain, of the perfectibility of our species ; it however holds out the cheering hope of the more extended influence of our Redeemer's sacrifice, and that more souls will be saved than lost.

A thing which causes intense pleasure, does not make so vivid an impression on the memory, as one which produces a slighter enjoyment. The cause is half forgotten, or swallowed up in the effect. When quite a child, the perusal of *Madame de Montolieu's Chateaux Suisses*, gave me more pleasure than any other book. I have a perfect recollection of the pleasure, but I forget nearly all the stories ; yet I remember most distinctly the contents of other books which gave me much less enjoyment. It appears but yesterday that I read the first of these *Chateaux Suisses* ; the delight which it caused, seemed to raise me far above myself—to dispel the usual timidity of my disposition.

Just as I had finished my story, I was called away to bed ; too happy to say a word, I fol-

lowed my nurse through the dim corridors, and up the broad oak staircase. Every common object we are daily accustomed to see without observing, becomes important, when the mind is powerfully excited.

On that evening, how well I remember the peculiar look of the great hall through which we passed, its pillars and upper gallery, and its two rows of high windows. A large lamp had just been lighted, and swung to and fro in the centre. Its flickering glare, mingled with the blue fading twilight, made the gigantic figures in Fuseli's pictures look more unearthly and terrible than ever. I looked on them with shuddering delight, for never had his vivid representation of Satan and infernal tortures appeared so real, or come so home to my comprehension. Then how beautifully shadowy were the outlines of the Grecian statues which stood in the niches. As we passed through the upper gallery, how *grand* did the echo of our footsteps sound! And there were the stuffed animals, and huge lion and leopard skins, at which I had always experienced a sort of vague terror; but now, I looked at them with

courage, too happy for any childish fears. My own wainscotted room, too, and the old bed with its brocaded curtains, how vivid did the pattern of carnations and gaudy peonies appear ; every thing looked brilliant and happy on that evening !

It is a sad thing to be much influenced by the countenances of those around us. The expression of some faces has such a depressing effect on my mind that to think of them only, paralyzes all my energies. Other countenances there are, which encourage and raise my spirits so much, that sometimes, before I begin any difficult study or employment, I find myself occupied in thinking of them. Lamb was sometimes made happy by the sight of a strange face which he passed in the street ; but then it does not seem to have exercised any permanent influence on his mind. Abercrombie relates many strange instances of spectral delusions ; and I sometimes think that the faces which influence my mind, must proceed from a disordered, or perhaps over-sensitive state of nerves. But then my spectral friends and enemies, are real persons. I hope my face does not haunt any one in the

same chilling and disagreeable manner that some countenances haunt me.

How delightful are those countenances which express at first sight a kind interest in those on whom they look, which seems to enquire, "What are you about?—have we anything in common?—can we be of use to each other?" This is the look which encourages and excites our energies; which at first sight fulfils that sublime commandment of our religion, "To love our neighbour as ourself." But alas! there are many who gaze upon a fellow-creature for the first time, with utter indifference, which is worse than contempt, because a contemptuous look sometimes excites our energy—we feel that we are not bad enough to be treated so, and therefore it is not so depressing as the dull-making gaze of indifference.

CHAPTER VI.

Journey to Wexford and Enniscorthy—Anecdotes of the Rebellion—Dick Hennesey, or the rights of man.

Tinahinch, County Wicklow.—THIS lovely place belongs to Mr. Grattan ; here his celebrated father lived, and it is full of interesting memorials of that great man. Besides his picture, the house contains those of many of the remarkable characters of the last century, who were his friends or relations. The glen in which it is situated, was then called the Happy Valley, from the social spirit which actuated its inhabitants ; though, from the sad influence of party spirit, it

no longer deserves the name, yet it looks as if it did so, and is certainly one of the most lovely spots imaginable.

The stream which runs through the dargle, is gliding along, just under my windows, with a pleasant soothing sound. Large sycamores and beech-trees overshadow its banks, and above them is seen the Sugar-loaf mountain ; its colour ever changing from dark purple to the light roseate hue of sunset, as the shadows or sunshine flit over its rugged brow.

Since last I took out my diary, we have seen much, and made a pleasant tour. From Waterford we went by New Ross, to Wexford ; the country is very pretty, particularly about New Ross, which is on the Nore, that fine river with which we had already made acquaintance at Woodstock, to whose beauty it contributes so materially. Wexford has many fearfully interesting associations connected with the rebellion of 1798.

We walked over the long bridge which was the scene of a dreadful massacre. We have a servant who can just remember the horrible

murder of his father and two uncles on that fatal bridge; he was there as a child with his grandfather, and remembers that the old man implored the brutal assassins to spare his life, for the sake of the child, his little grandson. The rebels' hearts were touched, and they granted the old man's prayer, who lived to bring up the boy.

Wexford has a greater air of antiquity about it than any Irish town I have seen ; the streets are very narrow, and the small pointed gables and windows look very original.

The inn is situated in what is called the principal street of the town; but it is so narrow that not only is it impossible for two carriages to pass, but foot passengers are obliged to get within some open door, when any vehicle goes by. Yet in this unpromising situation, we found a most excellent hotel—so good a one I have seldom seen in any country.

From Wexford we went to Enniscorthy, and were much disappointed with the beauty of the scenery through which the road passes. Inglis speaks of it as being extremely pretty. Enniscorthy itself is indeed beautifully situated on the

river Slaney; and Vinegar-hill, that spot so celebrated for the battle fought there during the rebellion, forms a fine feature in the view.

Whilst I was making the sketch which is here given, an old man came up to W——, and told him many dreadful things which happened during his youth in that town. He afterwards accompanied us during a long walk which we took in the neighbourhood. In passing through a wild and romantic looking glen, I remarked a blackened heap of stones, and shuddered as I thought that probably it had been the scene of some dreadful event during the civil wars. Our old companion saw that I looked with horror towards the spot, and he said :—

“I’ll tell ye something strange about them blackened walls; and indeed I wish ye’d spread the story of them far and wide, for I often think if all the rebellious chaps, and the people called Chartists, know’d what happened here, they’d lose their right hands sooner than go on a moment longer with their perilous practices. And yet what use is there?—who will take any body else’s experiencce, or larn from other’s mis-



Engraved by J. H. P. 1864

THE TOWN OF ENNISCORTHY AND VINEGAR HILL. Co. of WEXFORD.

Engraved by Saunders & Sons, Condent St. 1864.

Day & Bagley Engravers to the Queen



fortunes? Mustn't we all suffer for ourselves, and so where's the use of anything?" continued Mick, with a melancholy look.

"Oh! but do tell us about what happened in the old place," said I; "and if it won't do the good it ought, perhaps we may derive some amusement from the story."

"Well then, does yer honour see that little heap o' stones on the side of the hill just near where the stream rushes over the rock with a noise that if ye were up there, would sound for all the world like 'Be warned, poor Dick, be warned, poor Dick.' Well, there was once two cabins there, and in one of 'em lived a hard-working industrious man called Dick Hennesey. He had a daughter who was the comeliest girl in all Munster, and many suitors had she,—and the young O'Keefe, who was the eldest son of the squire that lived in the fine place out yonder called Mount Falcon Park, paid his court to her. But she loved no one but poor Jerry, who lived next door, and had nothing in the world but his two hands, and an honest tongue in his head, to say nothing of his being a handsome chap.

“ Well, but her father was ambitious like, and thought as she was the prettiest girl in Ireland, there was no reason why she should not marry the best of the land ; and he had his heart full of notions of equality, and the rights o’ man and these ideas, and he thought himself as good as the squire in the big house ; and so faix and perhaps he was, for the old gentleman was a sad ne’er-do-well, and drunken spendthrift : but then had’nt he had his own way from a child, and a long minority, and a power of riches, and’ nobody to say, Don’t do this or that, or speak a word of reason to him ? Well, Dick didn’t think o’ this, or make any excuses for anybody but himself.

“ One day the old squire O’Keefe was coming home intoxicated, as he often was before sunset, and he meets his son going down from Dick’s cottage. Now, somebody had whispered to him that young O’Keefe was looking after Rachel Hennesey, so he swears a great oath at his son, and said, ‘ I’ll go and see the girl.’

“ Up he comes to the cottage, and found poor Rachel alone, and all in a fluster, from the

young squire's visit ; and yet he was a civil-spoken young gentleman, and not like his father, and when he found Rachel didn't really like him, he went away. But the old squire was different, and the moment he saw how beautiful Rachel was, he determined she should be his ; so being, as I said, intoxicated, he went up and gave her a kiss, without so much as saying, 'by your lave.'

"Rachel cried out, and her father happened to be coming up the hill, and heard her cries. Now he had been to the Sheebeen-house, and moreover talking with some bad chaps about the rights o' man, and that ; and though he wasn't yet quite one of their party, yet there was a flame in him ready to blaze up at the first hint. So when he came into his cottage, and saw the old squire's arms round his daughter's neck, he struck him a tremendous blow with his shilalah. Squire O'Keefe was a powerful man, and though rather bewildered with the bating, he plucked up soon, and struck Dick right in the face, and called him all manner of ugly names, and said he'd burn the cabin over his head, and take

away his ground ; but he would have the girl for himself.

“ Now was Dick quite furious ; and if Rachel hadn’t thrown herself between them, he might have murdered the old squire outright. Well, as matters stood so, in comes neighbour Jerry ; and he soon understood what had happened, for Rachel whispered all about it to him in a minute, and implored him to see the squire safe home. Jerry was a good youth ; and though he was very angry with the squire, yet he helped him to get away from Dick. Whereupon Dick called him every bad name, and swore again, saying his daughter should never marry that low-born sneaking scoundrel—he had rather see her dead first.

“ That night Dick went full of wrath to meet the discontented boys, and there in the black glen he took a fearful oath. There were above two hundred conspirators, but six of ’em were the chiefs, and these swore to this compact : ‘ All the castles and gentlemen’s places near, were to be surprised and burnt ; the lands to be divided equally between the people.’ All swore

to assist each other in every thing they chose to undertake. Black Thady, who was the fiercest and most powerful of the conspirators, made them swear to help him to obtain a young girl for his wife, though he had had three already; and lots were to be drawn which was to be the person to help in the deed.

“Now there was a clergyman lived near, who had always been very kind to Dick, and taught his daughter to read; ‘and so,’ thinks Dick, ‘it’ll never do for him to be murdered. I’d rather see myself hung first; so thinks he, ‘all things must be done with justice; so I’ll propose that as each person is to get rid of his greatest enemy, so each person should be allowed to save one friend.’ ‘All fair,’ says the boys, so they all swore to that too. Now black Thady smiled when they took that oath, and poor Dick trembled when he saw it; for he knew Thady was a bad man, one who feared neither God nor hell, and he knew that when Thady smiled some mischief was brewing.

“‘God protect the pastor,’ thought Dick; then all of a sudden he trembled again, and

thought of his child, and he saw Thady's eyes fixed on him with a malignant and triumphant expression ; he remembered, too, that he had been courting Rachel last year, and she had scorned him.

“ Well, time went on ; the conspirators used to meet every night in the black glen, and their numbers went on increasing. The night of the 10th February was fixed for the execution of their dreadful designs. Dick had been turned out of his cabin, but he submitted to the indignity, and all the insolence of the squire's agents, with a patience which surprised his daughter, who expected him to take on quite wildly ; they didn't know he was laughing at 'em all the time. The cabin wasn't burnt, because it joined to Jerry's, and that he had helped the squire to get away from Dick's fury, and took him safe home. And now Jerry's family, his father and mother, was all kindness, and wanted to take in the outcasts ; but Dick wouldn't hear of it, and refusing them quite proudly, took his daughter off to the next village.

“ The night of the 10th arrived soon. Poor

Dick, who hadn't a bad heart, was almost sorry when the time came; but he tried to think of the squire's insolence, and all he and his darling child were to gain by the equal division of the property, and so on. Now the conspirators was under orders like, and most of 'em didn't exactly know beforehand what part of the duty they were to do that night. Dick hoped he should be of the party to plunder the squire's house; he took many drops of the mountain dew to give him courage, and when the band marched out he was so bewildered he hardly knew which way he was going.

" 'Sure these aint the old woods of Falconbridge park,' said Dick, to one of his companions; 'and what a hill we're going up!' 'Hush!—dont spake, or some one 'll give the alarm,' said the other. The night was very dark, and Dick couldn't at all make out whereabouts they were. The party scrambled over a low wall, and then went through a garden, and were proceeding to surround a dark mass, which Dick thought looked very small for Falconbridge castle. 'Sure everything is grown little to-night,' thought

he ; 'and the whiskey, instead of making me see double, has 'minished everything.'

"They proceeded in complete silence, but suddenly a dog began to bark. 'Speak to him, Dick, for God's sake,' whispered a voice, which Dick thought sounded like black Thady's ; 'say, Be quiet, Norman.'

" 'Norman !' exclaimed Dick ; 'has the squire a dog called Norman ?' And sure immediately the dog thought 'twas a friend's voice, for he left off barking ; but presently began a low wail, and Dick heard him struggling in the agonies of death.

" 'They have murdered him, the innocent baste,' thought poor Dick, and a cold shudder passed over him.

" 'Now help to batter in this window,' said a voice to Dick ; 'and here, thrust this light into the straw that's within, and the house will blaze in a minute.' Dick obeyed instinctively like, for he didn't well know what he was about. The straw caught fire, and soon the building was enveloped in flames.

"Dick thought of the squire's arrogance and

cruelty, for he now felt a savage thrill of exultation, as he contemplated the burning pile. 'He'll suffer for it all now. But what's this?—am I dreaming?' he continued, rubbing his eyes and staring as if they'd start from their sockets, as the flames crackled through the building, and disclosed its form with a vivid and lurid distinctness. 'Sure, an it's parson Laurence's house. Ochone! ochone! what have I done?—may my right hand be withered, and—.' He was interrupted by dreadful cries, and soon a white and venerable head was seen at an upper window; above and below him all was fire.

" 'Oh, save my child!' exclaimed the old pastor, joining his hands, and looking down towards his fiendish destroyers. 'Will no one try to rescue the innocent girl? What, Dick Hennesey! is it possible?—after all my child has done for yours.'

" 'Throw out the girl, and we'll take care of her, the darling,' said Thady, with a loud laugh.

" 'May God have mercy upon us all,' exclaimed the old parson. They were his last words—at that moment the roof of the building

fell in, with a tremendous crash. One long piercing shriek, mingling with the savage exultations and yells of triumph, was heard, and then no sound but the crackling beams and falling rafters disturbed the dead silence.

Dick had fallen on his face when the unfortunate clergyman recognized him, and remained there for some time in a sort of stupor. At last he raised his head, and the first object that met his gaze was the malicious countenance of Black Thady. ‘Fiend! devil! ye deceived me—didn’t ye all agree to save the parson—didn’t ye all swear?’

“ ‘ Didn’t you swear to help us in our vengeance; and more than that, to help us in our love? Come, come along, and help me to finish the work.’

“ ‘ I won’t stir a step; ye have basely deceived me. I’d rather lose my soul eternally, and be hung up for a thief and vagabone as I am, than—’

“ ‘ Well, then, I’ll go and tell your child you leave her to her fate.’

“ ‘ Ha! my child—my darling; what’ll be-

come of her now?—alack, there's no faith in mortal man!' And with the energy of despair, Dick jumped up, and full of agonizing apprehensions for her safety, ran to the village where he had left his child. Thady followed, and reached the hut just as the wretched father had entered it, and was about to close the door.

" 'Not so fast, good Mr. Hennesey; your oath is not yet fulfilled—I now claim my bride,' said Thady; 'and you swore to help me to obtain her. There she is, pretty darling, trembling and shaking in the corner like a lovely rose in a gale o' wind.'

" 'Oh, father! save me from that man,' shrieked poor Rachel, joining her hands in agony; 'I'd rather die than—'

" 'Oh, no, you musn't die, indeed, darling avourneen; besides, you won't have your father break his oath—he's just been performing part of it, by burning parson Laurence and his daughter.'

" 'It's false; I was deceived. Oh God! what have I done?—how could I league with such a devil; such a black, faithless fiend.'

“ ‘ Come, it’s no use talking ; give me my little wife. Come, darling ; yer father will recover his senses some day—he’s talking nonsense now,’ and Thady approached Rachel.

“ The unfortunate girl shrieked, and her wretched father seized a pike, and was about to strike her assailant, when Thady held out a pistol, which was concealed under his dress, and pointing it at Dick’s heart, with his other hand dragged the now fainting Rachel towards the door.

“ Dick, regardless of the danger, made a desperate plunge towards Thady. The ruffian pulled the trigger, but at that moment his arm was suddenly raised, the pistol went off—but its contents were lodged in the ceiling, and the pistol forcibly wrenched from his grasp. The report roused poor Rachel to full consciousness, and she saw that it was her own Jerry who had rescued her, and was now holding a pistol at Thady’s breast, while her father had secured the ruffian’s arms.

“ ‘ Shoot him !’ cried Dick ; ‘ shoot the black-hearted villain dead.’

“ ‘ No, I will not take his life ; but I will deliver him up to justice.’

“ ‘Justice!’ exclaimed Dick Hennesey, ‘when there are hundreds of his party going about to destroy the country, and murder every body; and I, fool that I was, to league myself with such imps of Satan!’

“ While he was saying this, a noise was heard in the street: Thady gave a long shrill whistle, it was answered by another from without.

“ ‘Finish him, Jerry; don’t ye hear they are coming to the rescue?’

“ It was too late; in a moment the cottage was full of people, poor Dick was knocked down, and Black Thady liberated. They were a band of conspirators who had just returned from Falconbridge Castle; Jerry saw that they were more than half intoxicated; and though the savage expression of triumph on their fiendish countenances shewed how powerfully their passions had been excited, yet they scarcely now knew what they were doing.

“ ‘Come along, Thady; don’t be wasting yer time with the wench—the work isn’t half done,’ said one of the band, who seemed to be the leader; and without listening to the remonstrances of Thady, dragged him off.

“ As soon as their footsteps had died away, and the savage yells of the conspirators became more faint in the distance, Jerry raised the unfortunate Hennesey from the ground. Rachel threw her arms round her father’s neck. ‘ Thank God ! ’ exclaimed she, ‘ for saving my dear parent. Oh ! let us fly ; let us go at once, before they return. Come, dearest father.’

“ But Dick Hennesey spoke not ; he had received a mortal blow from one of the conspirators—he was dead !

“ And here was the end of the man who had leagued himself with the rebels. He died murdered by the hands of his companions in crime, after having been the means of destroying the respectable minister who had been his best friend.

“ The rebels succeeded in most of their horrible designs—the castles were burnt—the owners killed—but none were the better for it ; they did nothing but quarrel about the spoil ; one saying, as he had done more than the others, he was entitled to more. Those who had been leaders of bands insisted on having a larger

share than the common men who were under orders. So all the equality and universal riches they had bothered their heads and made themselves so uneasy about, came to nothing at all at all."

"But what became of poor Rachel and Jerry?" I enquired.

"Oh! they got away safe and sound, the Lord be praised, and went to England; and their descendants are well to do in the world, and live in a nate house and a garden before it, and a fine field behind it, situated in a pretty village in the county of Devonshire. And God bless 'em, so it is."

"Well, this is a strange story," said W; "and I think poor Dick was very unlucky; for surely he met with so much provocation as almost to justify his taking vengeance on the squire."

"What! and set fire to his house, and burn him alive, and all his family, and destroy the place? Well, I wonder to hear yer honor say that; for sure if the poor were to take the law into their own hands every time they got provo-

cation from the rich, or even from the poor too, what would become of the nation at all at all? The Lord save us! I wonder to hear the likes of yer honor say sich a thing, you that have got a power o' larning and edication, to shew ye what's really just and reasonable. Well, if ye could say that, I don't wonder any longer there being so many poor deluded fools in the land—the Lord guide them and keep them from harm, for sure I spose and *they* don't know any better."

Here was another of those instances which I have remarked so often of a poor simple peasant evincing more just notions, right-mindedness, and true Christian feeling, than is often to be met with among the highly cultivated.

CHAPTER VII.

A novel mode of proposing to a young Lady—Journey to Drogheda—The battle of the Boyne—Rosstrevor—A Peasant's story of Avelina and the Danes.

FROM Enniscorthy we made a delightful tour through the county of Wicklow, visiting Ovoca, Glendaloch, Glenmalure, and the Devil's Glen. This scenery is so well known, and has been so often described, that I shall say nothing, except that I think it well deserves its high reputation, and that my mind is full of the pleasant recollections which it gave. With our kind friends here (at Tinahinch) we have made excursions to Powerscourt, Kilruddery, and some other fine places in this neighbourhood.

I was told to-day of an odd occurrence which

took place in this part of the country some years ago. It was a somewhat novel mode of proposal resorted to by an unhappy young man labouring under the double malady of excessive love and insurmountable modesty.

A large party was staying in the country-house where the young lady and her shy but devoted admirer were on a visit. There were many opportunities for prosecuting his suit; but, alas! he could never muster up courage to approach her, or even write a letter to the object of his affections.

However, great as was his bashfulness, greater was his love; and in this dire extremity he so far overcame his scruples as to take an intimate friend of the lady into his confidence. To her he confessed all, and ended by imploring her to aid him in his perplexities, and compose for him a letter of proposal to his fair one.

The confidante complied with his request, and giving the love lorn youth the desired billet-doux, enjoined him to present it that day, as delay was dangerous. He immediately transcribed it, and placing the precious document in

his waistcoat pocket, anxiously watched for a favourable moment to deliver it to the lovely Miss P——.

Many favourable moments occurred ; but, alas ! the lover's courage failed him : it was always sure to vanish just as he wanted it most. Dinner time passed, the ladies withdrew, and there was the letter still in the waistcoat pocket, next the throbbing heart of the nervous in-amorato.

By this time the treacherous confidante had enlightened the whole party as to the state of affairs ; they were all aware of the wishes and dilemma of our poor hero, so that when he appeared in the drawing-room, all eyes were upon his movements.

And what did he do ? Nothing. With his fingers fumbling in the important pocket, his cheeks tingling with a thousand blushes, his eyes rivetted on the graceful form and lovely face of Miss P——, he stood, the picture of helpless embarrassment, bashfulness, and love. Time was running on—the hands of the pendule on the mantel-piece pointed to eleven,—the

family were people of early habits. Miss P——, who had been playing the harp, was approaching the end of a beautiful air—the footman had just brought in the bedchamber candlesticks. “Now or never,” thought the almost desperate lover; and he drew the letter half out of the pocket, “but *how* shall I give it?”

“Nella scuola d'amor che non s'apprende?”

A bright idea suddenly struck him—there was not a moment to be lost; for the last page of the music-book had been turned over. Suddenly emerging from the corner behind the harp, into which he had squeezed himself, he made a violent plunge forward, thrust the letter down the lady's back, and darted out of the room.

The agonies of shame that accompanied this feat were doomed, alas! to be followed by the agonies of disappointment. Miss P—— cruelly refused to smile upon this attempt to obtain her favour, despite its claim to novelty and originality of design.

Drogheda, Monday.—This morning we drove

along the banks of the Boyne, and rambled over the site of that battle which is so celebrated and important in Irish, and indeed in English history. It has been sung by the poet and the beggar in the halls of the great, and in the abodes of wretchedness. The Boyne is still a watchword of party-spirit; and I am glad to have seen the place which excites so many interesting recollections, and sketched the obelisk which has been raised to the memory of King William. The clump of trees on the opposite height is the spot from whence poor King James beheld the defeat of his army.

Not far from the obelisk there is a very pretty glen, where a profusion of wild honey-suckles and roses, growing among the rocks, and perfuming the air with their sweetness, are wreathed into such a variety of fantastic forms, that they look as if twined by the graceful hands of fairies. This glen runs up from the broader valley where the battle was fought, and on the height to the right we were shewn the spot where King William's artillery was planted. Down this sweet and peaceful-looking glen, the roar of can-

and must then have been learnt : the wounded and the dying must have lain among these rocks. I hope the woundmen and those poor there then, and that their sweet perfume, which seems to me always to inspire hope and confidence in the goodness of God, may even amid the tumult of battle have visited their sufferings, and spoken peace to them in their last hours.

Kilbuckin, Friday.—In travelling through a country for the first time, we often note down, as national characteristics, what are only the results of our own more keen observation. In our own country we do not observe so much, because we fancy that we are well acquainted with its ways and peculiarities.

We left Drogheda early this morning, and soon afterwards passed near the ancient round tower at Monasterboice. It appears to be very perfect, and I stopped to make a little sketch of it. Castle Bellingham, the first stage where we changed horses, is a very pretty little place. The alms-houses for poor widows were built and adorned with much taste by the owner of the estate.

The inn at Castle Bellingham is excellent, and we regretted much that we did not pass Sunday there instead of at Drogheda.

Dundalk is a very thriving town ; but as we only changed horses there, we saw very little of it. Between that place and Newry we passed near Ravensdale, the beautiful residence of Mr. Fortescue. It is situated in a romantic and woody glen, between fine mountains ; and the view from the house must be lovely.

Newry is a very picturesque town, and looks very prosperous ; the drive from it to this place (Rosstrevor) is through a succession of charming scenery. I arrived here quite tired after our long journey ; but as the day was so fine I made a great effort to walk as far as the beach, where I sat down under the shade of some fine oaks, and admired the view, which on all sides is beautiful ; and we discovered a most enticing little path, which leads up the mountain, through the fine woods which clothe its sides. I felt much restored by the sea breezes, and we continued to ascend the steep path, meaning to do so until we should reach some point which com-

manded a view : but we sought for it in vain ; the trees continued to grow most provokingly together ; so we climbed up and up, and the higher we went, the stronger and less tired I became, and at last we reached very nearly to the summit of the mountain. Such a mountain ! and oh ! what a view then burst upon us. Carlingford Bay, which lay at our feet, is in form something like the lake of Como, but on a larger scale. On the Rosstrevor side fine trees cover the mountains, and dip their wide-spreading branches into the bay. All this has to me a greater charm from the fact that these blue tranquil waters are the sea.

We returned from the top of the mountain by another path, and passed near a large rock which is called Cloughmore, and which at a little distance we took for a cottage. Soon afterwards we entered the beautiful grounds belonging to Mr. Ross, and with some difficulty found our way home. We did not reach the hotel till it was quite dark, very tired, but enchanted with our expedition.

Saturday Morning.—The scenery of Ross-



VIEW OF CARLINGFORD BAY, near ROSS-TREVOY ... CO. OF DOW

Published by Saunders & Okey, Condover St. 1867

Engraved by John H. Hutton

Donegal Lake in the Queen's



trevor is celebrated, but its beauty far exceeds my expectations; and then there is no appearance of squalid misery to mar the effect, as is too frequently the case in Ireland: here the people look happy, and the cottages are comfortable, as well as pretty.

The women indeed often wear no shoes or stockings; but they have such pretty feet, and the other parts of their dress look so neat and clean, the bright-coloured handkerchief is so well arranged over their shoulders, and the little plaited white caps so becoming, that one cannot help fancying the foot is left uncovered, more to shew its beauty than from poverty.

Tuesday.—The weather would not allow us to ascend the highest mountain near this place, which we had intended to do to-day. So we strolled about between the showers, and passed many pleasant hours in the lovely gardens belonging to different villas, which the owners most kindly allow strangers to enjoy.

Each of these abodes seems to vie with the others in loveliness; good taste is shewn in the architecture of the dwellings, as well as in the

arrangement of the garden walks, the green-houses, and the rustic bridges which are thrown over mountain torrents. Flowers bloom in the greatest profusion. I remarked great varieties of geraniums and roses, growing apparently wild under the wide-spreading trees which separate the hay and corn fields. Everything is perfect—every inch of ground is adorned and made useful. The troughs which the cattle drink out of, are carved and ornamented, as well as the gates to the fields and farm yards. The village church and school are beautiful: then the children seem so well educated—smiles and bows greet one on all sides, from rosy faces. The girls' hair well combed and arranged, and their dresses and white aprons scrupulously clean; and even the boys' coats, those usually most dilapidated parts of the human attire, appear well brushed and mended. I have not seen a rag, a broken window, or a miserable face, in the whole place.

Two elderly ladies came to this delightful little inn, intending to remain only a few days,—they have been here upwards of two years! No wonder.

We had been told that we should not meet with so many interesting characters among the poor in the north as we have in the south. Perhaps they have not so much poetry in their disposition, but they are an interesting race ; and to-day we met a poor boy, who accompanied us in our long walk, and told me several anecdotes and legends, which, though devoid of much wit or humour, almost rival, in point of interest, those of his southern brethren. I shall give, as nearly as I can in his own words, the story which pleased us most. It is founded, like many which the peasantry in different parts of the country have told me, on a circumstance related in the early histories of Ireland.

“ In the reign of Melachlin, king of Meath, the Danes had possession of nearly all Ireland. The poor Irish were not only oppressed and treated like slaves in the most cruel manner, but all our religious houses, our books, and our colleges for learning, were burnt and destroyed ; the clergy were expelled from Ireland, or obliged to take refuge with its suffering nobles in the

mountains, and many were starved to death or fell a prey to the wild beasts.

“In the midst of all this misery, our Irish prince of Meath had a daughter, who never despaired of seeing her dear country restored to its ancient greatness. This lovely princess Avelina had a true Irish spirit, and her kind heart shone out through her eyes like the mid-day sun, brightening and cheering whatever she looked on. She was betrothed to the young prince of Munster; but his territories were in possession of the Danes, and himself an exile, no one knew where, except his beautiful mistress. But Avelina wasn't like many fair ones, who can't keep a secret. She said nothing about him; only her joyous smiles shewed she did not despair of his safety.

“Now the king of the Danes, whose name was Turges, was a horrible man, and the most cruel prince that ever caused a whole people to groan. Not satisfied with having taken the kingdom of all Ireland, and the noble city of Dublin, from our king Melachlin, and hunted him like a wild beast into the little territory of

Meath, he must needs go and build a fine castle for himself, close to Melachlin's palace. From the ramparts of this castle he could look down into Melachlin's park, and there one day he saw the beautiful Avelina.

"He was no longer at war with Melachlin, having agreed to leave him unmolested in his own patrimony of Meath when he got possession of all the rest of Ireland. So the proud Dane often went to visit the fallen prince after he had once seen his beautiful daughter. King Turges had already two wives alive; others had died from his cruel treatment. However, he thought to honor our prince Melachlin mightily by demanding Avelina in marriage. Our poor prince had only this one daughter, and she was such a precious jewel as to console him for all his misfortunes. He could'nt endure the idea of parting with her to that dreadful tyrant; yet he saw it would be impossible to refuse, as he had not sufficient troops to fortify his city or prevent her being carried away by force.

"The poor old father was quite cast down by this last and heaviest blow. Not so his

daughter. She said to him, with one of her sweetest smiles, ' Agree to the king's proposal ; but tell him that as our religion does not permit a man to have more than one wife, it would be useless, and a mockery of our faith, to have the form of a marriage ceremony. Tell him that I do not object to his wishes ; but that I could never bear to lose my character, and be pointed at as a disgrace to my country. If he will promise the utmost secrecy, I will, with fifteen of my companions, each more beautiful than your Avelina, repair to his castle. It must be in the dark, and on the sixth evening after this day.'

"Melachlin was utterly confounded at the ready manner in which his beloved child consented to such a dreadful fate, and exclaimed that he would rather die fifty deaths than see her calmly submit to such indignity. However, his sprightly daughter was accustomed to have her own way, and she soon whispered a few words in his ear, which induced him to consent to her strange plan.

"The haughty Dane was delighted to hear that Avelina had so readily consented to his wishes.

He promised the utmost secrecy, and that the lovely princess, and her fifteen fair companions, should be loaded with costly presents, and invested with whatever honour and dignity they wished. He was the more pleased with this plan of secrecy, as the last wife he had married was the daughter of a powerful chief, whom he did not wish to offend, and she was extremely jealous of his attentions to any other fair ones.

“ Enchanted with the prospect of possessing the lovely Avelina on the following week, he proceeded at once to quell some disturbances which had arisen in Dublin. Here, with the assistance of his valiant brothers, and some other Danish princes, who had assisted him before in the conquest of Ireland, he soon reduced everything to a state of tranquillity. More Irish were slaughtered and exiled; and to reward the services of the bravest of his brothers and companions, he told them they should each have to wife the most lovely Irish girl they had yet seen, with a splendid dower. He then explained to them in secret his designs on the fair princess of Meath, the fame of whose beauty was well

known all over Ireland; and her companions, who were all of the blood royal, and said to be lovely in the extreme, he destined as brides to his followers.

“Turges returned to his castle in Meath accompanied by fifteen of his most chosen generals, on the day when Avelina and her lovely train had promised to arrive. He himself waited at the private entrance of his garden to admit the fair throng; and under pretence of giving a private banquet to his chosen friends, all that wing of the castle had been cleared of its usual inmates.

“The princess Avelina, attired in a long flowing veil, which concealed her whole person, was the first to enter the gate. Her fifteen followers, dressed in the same mysterious disguise, followed; and the whole party were conducted by Turges to the banqueting-hall. Here Turges was about to withdraw the veil which concealed the fair countenance of Avelina, when he was suddenly attacked. Fifteen swords flashed from beneath the flowing garments of Avelina's companions, and the Danish generals, who were unarmed,

and intent on nothing but mirth, were soon put to death.

“ King Turges was bound with cords, which the fair hands of the injured princess assisted to secure. Her companions threw off their disguise, and no more appearing like soft maidens, stood confessed young heroes, chosen by the fair princess to avenge their country. At their head was her betrothed husband, the exiled prince of Munster, who caused a trumpet to be sounded in token of victory.

“ At this signal, the rightful king entered the apartment, at the head of a band of followers, who had been secretly assembled by the intrepid and thoughtful princess; and she had stationed them outside the private entrance, in order that they might come to her assistance in case of failure. The soldiers of the usurper, alarmed at the noise, now poured in from all directions, but were soon put to the sword.

“ The darkness of the night, the suddenness of the attack, and above all, the strange capture of their king, so terrified the Danes, that though there was a large army of them stationed

in the town, they were soon utterly defeated. The young prince of Munster, overjoyed at having rescued his bride from the tyrant's power, fought with desperate valour.

"The joyful intelligence of this wonderful victory spread in an instant all over Ireland. The Danes were everywhere surprised and slaughtered, and their king was condemned to death by the victorious Irish, for his dreadful cruelties, and the sentence was executed by plunging him into a lake. The day that reseatd Melachlin on the throne of his ancestors, gave to the prince of Munster his patrimony and his beautiful bride.

"And a joyful day it was. The name of Avelina was adored throughout the whole country, and her memory will last as long as a true Irish heart is left in this land."

The boy who related the above tale, also told us the origin of the name Rosstrevor, which is well known; but he threw some of his romantic spirit into the narration, and made us feel quite an interest for the lovely Rose, a rich heiress, who married Mr. Trevor, the former possessor

of this place, and thus gave it their united names—Rose, or as it is now called, Ross-trevor. When we took leave of this poor boy at the end of our walk, he thanked us for “the pleasure of our conversation.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Bryansford—Journey to the Giant's Causeway by Glenarm and the Coast—Visit to Shane Castle—Legend of the Fairy Nil Rue—Arrival in Scotland—Reflections on Life and Writings of Sir W. Scott.

Bryansford, Thursday.—EVERY term of admiration that it was possible to find was exhausted at Rosstrevor. So what can I say here, where the village, the inn, the view, and above all, Lord Roden's park, has enchanted me so much, even more than Rosstrevor did?

The window at which I am writing commands a view of Tollymore Park, with its noble background of mountains; the most conspicuous of which is the giant of the north, Slieve Donard. On the left is the blue sea, with the heights of

the Isle of Man in the far distance. Immediately in front of the inn is a little garden full of flowers ; and beyond that and the high road there is a row of ash trees, with a gravel terrace-walk and some rustic benches under them. This walk looks so like the promenade of a foreign town, that I have been expecting to see some well-dressed French or German belles and moustachioed officers pass by ; but a far more gratifying sight has met my gaze.

This well-kept walk seems intended for the recreation of the poor. Yesterday evening it was crowded with the village children, while the old cottagers occupied the benches, or sauntering up and down smiled with pleasure at the sounds of merriment which burst from the youthful groups. Then what a view they have from that walk, to enchant and elevate their minds ! Two old labourers, who were eating their breakfast this morning under the shade of those ash trees, evidently enjoyed the extensive prospect. I saw one, pointing out some object in the distance to the other, and they shewed it to a little rosy girl who brought them their

breakfast, and she too looked with admiration on the scene.

We came yesterday from Rosstrevor by Kilkeel and the coast, and we were somewhat disappointed in the scenery. I think the shorter road over the mountain by Hilltown would have been pleasanter. On approaching Newcastle, however, the view is beautiful. It is a charming sea-bathing place, and the houses appear well-built and comfortable. With this place, Bryansford, I am even more pleased than I expected; and we have passed two most agreeable days rambling over the drives and walks in Tollymore Park, which is of great extent and variety.

Friday.—In a comfortable hotel close to the Giant's Causeway. We left Bryansford yesterday morning, and passing through Belfast, Carrigfergus, and Larne, reached Glenarm late in the evening. As we intend to visit Belfast again, we only stopped to change horses. The drive from that place to Carrigfergus, along the coast, is very fine; and the old capital of Antrim, with its venerable castle, formed a striking fea-



^a $\chi^2 = 1.0$, $df = 1$, $p = .32$.
^b $\chi^2 = 1.0$, $df = 1$, $p = .32$.
^c $\chi^2 = 1.0$, $df = 1$, $p = .32$.

1. *What is the purpose of the study?*
 2. *What are the research objectives?*
 3. *What is the research methodology?*
 4. *What are the results of the study?*
 5. *What are the conclusions of the study?*
 6. *What are the limitations of the study?*
 7. *What are the implications of the study?*
 8. *What are the future research directions?*
 9. *What are the contributions of the study?*
 10. *What are the key findings of the study?*

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ture in the view for many miles before we reached it.

Some places have an indescribable charm about them, without possessing much feature or character. Glenarm, which we quitted this morning, is one of them. The little bay in which it is situated, the cliffs, and the undulating wooded heights behind the town, have all a look of quiet fascination. The sea, on this part of the coast, is peculiarly clear; I never saw it more so, even at Naples. The white masses of rock, and the bright-coloured pebbles, may be seen to a great depth below the surface of the light green waters. Glenarm Castle, the residence of the Antrim family, with its antique pinnacles and towers, forms indeed a fine object in the landscape; and its gardens and pleasure-grounds adorn the scene. In the evening I made the sketch of it, which is here given.

We should have remained in the quiet little town for some days, if the inn had been placed anywhere but in the only narrow street of the place where no view could be seen, except that of a dilapidated house just opposite. At Cushen-

dall, the next town on the coast, (where we changed horses,) the inn is better placed ; it stands in a garden out of the town, but unfortunately not very near the sea.

Between these two places we passed Red-bay, which, with its caves, ruined castle, and a gallery cut through the dark red rocks, is very striking. After leaving Cushendall, we ascended a mountain-pass, where I believe the scenery is fine ; but we soon became enveloped in fog, and could see nothing. The mist continued to haunt our path during the rest of our long day's journey ; and even now the only object which is very distinctly visible, is the cheerful fire that burns in this comfortable room.

Saturday.—The fog cleared away, a warm sun brightened the landscape, and we have walked to the Giant's Causeway, and to the caves, and over the cliffs to the Pleaskins. This last spot is very well worth seeing. Basaltic columns rise abruptly from the sea in successive tiers to a great height. The projecting headland, called the Chimnies, is there seen to great advantage ; and as the evening was very clear,

we had a fine view of the coast of Scotland, and the rocky heights of Mull and the western islands. We saw also the coast of Ireland as far as Fairhead, with the lofty mountain on the right, and, on the other side, the shores of Donegal. The guides who were with us said they had never seen the distant land so distinctly before. We saw the sun go down into the northern sea, and we watched the distant shores of Scotland till the sky behind them changed from a deep red to a pale green hue.

Monday.—We spent several hours this fine morning on the Giant's Causeway, and sat on a column at the very end, close to the sea, enjoying the wonderful scene. There is nothing striking at first sight in the appearance of the Giant's Causeway, and therefore to take a long journey merely to see it once, must be very unsatisfactory and disappointing. But when we come to dwell a little upon the scene, to view it on different sides, and to examine these wonderful columns, no one, I think, could leave the place without being impressed with the grandeur of this extraordinary work of nature,

—a work which looks so like art, we can scarcely persuade ourselves that the popular superstition is not true ; and that these columns, which fit together so beautifully, were not chiselled by giants' hands.

We have passed four days and nights at Miss Henry's comfortable hotel, and our days were spent on the Causeway and neighbouring heights. During this time many successions of visitors have arrived ; most of them paid one hurried visit to the Causeway, and went away looking very much disappointed. I should like to remain a month ; but we have now no more time, and are just starting on our road to Belfast.

Tuesday evening, Port-Stewart.—On our road here from the Giant's Causeway, we visited the ruins of Dunluce Castle, the ancient residence of the Antrim family. It stands on a high rock which rises perpendicularly out of the sea ; and under this rock there is a cavern into which the ocean rushes with a wild and romantic sound. The only approach to the rock and castle from the main land is along a ruined arch which traverses the chasm, and is only fourteen inches

wide. Some of our party were rather frightened at walking over the narrow path ; it is certainly rather nervous work, for one false step would plunge one into the ocean, which rages at a great depth below ; but I think this little difficulty of approach enhances the pleasure of a visit to the ruins ; and the view from some of its old towers and windows is very striking and grand. There are some well-known fairy and other legends connected with it, which are very interesting.

Port-Stewart seems to be an improving sea-bathing place, but it has rained so hard since our arrival, that we have been able to see scarcely anything of it. The bathing here is said to be very good, and the hotel appears to be extremely clean and comfortable ; indeed, all through the north of Ireland, we have met with very good inns, and they are generally full of visitors. The number of tourists here, compared with the few we meet with in the south, is very striking, particularly as the scenery, with the exception of Rosstrevor, Tollymore,

and one or two other spots, is not by any means so fine.

Another great difference between the north and south, is the superior air of comfort and wealth among the peasantry; and yet I do not think they look so happy, so full of indolent enjoyment, as their more ragged brethren of the south. They appear more full of the cares, as well as of the good things of this life—they are less lively and animated; but we see more indications of good sense in their dress and dwellings. Many of the cottages have large latticed windows; and I have not remarked any of the men working in heavy great-coats on a hot day; nor any women carrying loads on their backs wrapped up in their cloaks, as they so often do in the south.

Belfast, Friday.—Our journey from Port-Stewart to this place, was very pleasant; we passed through Coleraine, and the pretty little improving-looking towns of Ballymona and Ballymena; and at Randalstown we entered the extensive grounds of Shane Castle, belonging to Lord O'Neill. They extend above four

miles along the shore of Loch Neagh, which is the largest lake in Europe, after the lake of Geneva. It appears even larger than its Swiss sister, for the banks are low, and in some directions no land is to be seen beyond the blue expanse of waters which bounds the horizon. The ruins of the old castle, which was burnt some years ago, are situated near the lake; and a fine terrace and conservatory which was in progress when the castle was destroyed, commands a splendid view. This terrace and the gardens are well kept, as Lord O'Neill occupies a temporary residence in the grounds.

A little roguish-looking old man, who shewed us over the place, gave the following account of its destruction :—

“ There is a fairy of the lake, called Nil Rue, and the queen of all the fairies in Ulster was she; and from the time old Ireland first came up out o' the sea, long life to its honor, Nil Rue had dominion over its blue waters of Loch Neagh. She was very jealous of any body's approaching too near, or building houses, or even cultivating the land close to the shore. Now,

the family of O'Neill was powerful and great, and they had possessions all over Ulster ; as well they might, seeing how celebrated they are in our ould history.

“ So O'Neill was determined to build a fine castle on the lake, and sure enough he did so ; but Nil Rue was angry, and vowed she would have vengeance in the end ; though out of regard to the bravery of O'Neill, she would leave them undisturbed for four centuries, till she saw how they continued to bear the prosperity God gave them.

“ So, Nil Rue and the O'Neill's was friends like together, only she always appeared with her red hood and blue cloak, when any of the family was going to die ; and then 'twas said, she grinned with delight, and you might hear her laugh to the other side of the lake, all over Lord Massereene's fine place—the Lord save us.

“ There was a beautiful child of the O'Neill's, a little girl, that was as fair as the day ; and the lord and lady doated down upon her, more than any o' their fine boys ; and they took more care upon her, for the good women had foretold

strange things about her, and they was always afread to lave her out o' their sight.

“The little girl was very fond o' 'flowers, and she would run after any new one she see, like a pretty butterfly that's just born. One day, the family was travelling from here to another o' their fine castles, and as they stopped for a bit on the shore o' the lake, near that big bog, as you might see, over yonder, if the fine trees hadn't grown up and hid it. The little girl ran and picked one o' them white fairy flowers as grows on the bogs; now, as ill luck would have it, this was Nil Rue's own garden, and them white flowers was her special favorites—she watered them every morning with the tears of her enemies.*

“The child had plucked a great many before Nil Rue had perceived what she was about; but when she seed her favourites, she cried out

* I do not know the name of these white flowers, nor do I remember ever to have seen them, except on the bogs of the north of Ireland; they are most spectral looking and shadowy plants, so slender and transparent, that the least breath of wind sets them in motion.

with a shriek, that sounded over all the four corners of the lake, and everybody thought the day of judgment itself was come. And sure it was the day o' judgment to the poor child, for she never lived in this world o' flesh and blood to see another. That very night she was whipped up out of her fine silken cradle, and taken off by Nil Rue to the good people; and nobody knew what had become of her but her nurse, who suspected that no good could happen to the child, when she found that it had picked the fairy flowers on the bog. The Lord be merciful to our sinful souls !

“ Now the queen o' the fairies was not satisfied wi' taking away the beautiful child from its doating parents ; but what does she do but poisons the little innocent's mind, and brings her up to hate the family of O'Neill. She invents all manner o' black sayings agin them, never letting the babe know that she was a lawful daughter o' that honoured race, long life to it—and she too young to remember anything about it. So the girl grows up, and Nil Rue only waited for a fitting opportunity to finish her vengeance on the O'Neill's.

“ Well, about this time, that is to say, when the daughter o’ the house had come to years o’ discretion—that is, as would have been if she had been like one of us mortals, instead o’ living underneath the waters yonder, as they say she did, in fine coral houses, all paved with the dead men’s bones as was drowned in the lake, and with only fishes to attend upon her, and teach her human manners and larning ! Well, as I said before, when she was about twenty-one, the earl her father begin to build this fine terrace as we now stand upon, and those grand new rooms and consarvations wi’ the flowers in ’em under glass.

“ ‘ Well,’ says Nil Rue, when she seed the masons at work, ‘ well, if them oudashus O’Neill’s ain’t encroaching nearer still to my dominions ! I that have spared them for four hundred years, and never exterminated them entirely ; well, if one stone o’ that fine castle stands upon the other after this cursed night, my name is not Nil Rue.’

“ With that she goes down straight into the blue water, and calls Alice Rue, as she had

named the Christian daughter of O'Neill. 'My child,' says she, putting on one of her sweetest smiles, 'take this here lanthorn, and when night is come, and you see the lights burning in my enemy's castle, and when you hear the sound o' music in their halls, and the song and the dance is going on, and feasting in the banquet-room, go in among them, and set fire to the building, and burn it—aye, burn it over their heads; and let every mother's son o' them perish in its ruins.'

"Now O'Neill's daughter trembled, but she had been taught to think vengeance a fine thing, and she knew no better; and so when night came, into the castle she flies. Nobody saw her, because she did not know herself, and so she was indivisible to mortal eye. She went through the ball-room and the banquet-hall, but they looked so beautiful, and so full o' illigant ladies and gentlemen, she hadn't the heart to set fire to them.

"All the time Nil Rue followed her unperceived, to see that the bloody work was done; but she would not put hand to it herself, be-

cause in her malice she wished to make the punishment come upon the family from a daughter o' their own house ; and after it was done, she meant to tell the unfortunate girl who she was.

“ Well, the queen o' the fairies follows her adopted child all over the castle till they came to the kitchen. Now this was by no means so illigant as the rest ; and as Alice Rue had never seen a dinner dressed before, or meat roasting at the fire, she was like thunderstruck, and begun to pity the poor birds as was dead and bleeding. Thinks she, ‘ Well now, they are a bloody race, these O'Neill's— for sure they feed on those beautiful pheasants and partridges, that we good people would not so much as harm one o' their feathers.’


“ Your honour knows that the good people never ate any mate, so no wonder the lady was shocked to see the carcasses of her favourites roasting afore the fire, and a great fat cook turning and twisting 'em about without any manner of reverence or commiseration. Thinks O'Neill's daughter, ‘ I'll do it now, and exterminate the inhuman race !’ And so saying, she set fire to a

pile of linen as was airing for the strangers' beds, and in a moment the castle was in a blaze!

"There was no one at hand to help, as all the servants were up stairs a-sarving the company, and not a living soul in the kitchen but the cook and the old nurse Norah, her as had nursed every one o' the family till the last darlin was taken away from them.

"Now when Nil Rue saw the castle fairly in a blaze, she touched O'Neill's daughter, and bid her assume her mortal shape. In a moment all the remembrance of her childhood returned, and she knew it was her own father's castle she had destroyed. 'Oh hone,' says she, finding suddenly her former Christian speech, 'Oh hone! father and mother dear, what will I do?—oh God! forgive me—I have murdered you all!'

"Now the old nurse was just at the last gasp, but when she heard her darling's voice, she looked up through the flames, and running across the burning room, she threw her arms round the poor girl's neck. 'Now I die content,'



says she, ‘ as I have seen my darlint once more.’

“ ‘ Oh, let me go—oh, save my father and mother dear!’ sobs the poor girl; ‘ sure, ’tis I have murdered them entirely.’

“ ‘ Yes, you have murdered them,’ says Nil Rue, with a savage grin; ‘ they cannot escape; and as for you, the castle will fall upon you afore you can even give them a daughter’s kiss!’

“ And true enough so it did; though the noble family escaped, the castle was burnt and reduced to the ruin you now see it, and the body o’ the old nurse was found in the kitchen, and her arms was wound round a skeleton; and her sister, as is a wise woman, said it was the bones of O’Neill’s daughter she was clinging to, that child as was lost nineteen years afore.

“ And some believed her, and some did not. One thing is plain, it was’nt the cook, as she escaped, and so did all the other servants; so who could it be but O’Neill’s lost daughter?”

After hearing this wild tale, we rambled over the old ruins, and went down to the kitchen,

which had been the scene of such a sad catastrophe. There is an air of desolate grandeur, and a sort of wild, fairy look about the place ; its mouldering walls, and above all, the broad surface of the quiet lake, strongly incline the mind to superstitious feeling.

After leaving Shane castle and grounds, we drove to Antrim, and passed not far from its ancient round tower. It stands among some fine trees, above whose wide-spreading branches it rises in proud majesty. This tower is said to be the most perfect in Ireland, being quite entire from the base to the slender point of its conical summit.

The sessions were going on at Antrim, and no post-horses to be had, or any accommodation for the night at the inns. We were in a sad dilemma, as it was late, and Belfast thirteen miles off. Fortunately, we at last procured a common jaunting-car, in which we jolted off, leaving the carriage to follow when we should send horses from Belfast. The evening was very fine, and we had a delightful drive, which I enjoyed much, even after the fatigue of a long day's journey,

and two hours walk at Shane castle. It was night when we arrived at a comfortable hotel at Belfast.

This is by far the cleanest, most industrious, and least ostentatious-looking town I have seen in Ireland; and the country we travelled through to it from Coleraine, bears more indications of comfort and prosperity than we have before remarked; we have not seen a single cottage without windows or chimnies; indeed most of them have large windows and respectable-sized doors. We were fortunate in making an agreeable acquaintance here, under whose kind auspices we saw some of the principal manufactories to great advantage.

July 24th. Luss, a pleasant little inn on Loch Lomond.—We have now been in Scotland about a fortnight. I am even more pleased with the country than I expected; and yet Scott and other writers have thrown such poetry over the land, they have so extolled its scenery, that I feared after reading those glowing descriptions, the reality might please me less; but it is quite the contrary.

Scott's interesting history of Scotland is our valuable and constant companion. We find that one of the pleasures of a tour in Scotland, arises from so much of the property remaining in the families of the ancient possessors, and from the vivid recollection of historical events which still exists among the people, giving a peculiar interest, and as it were, a vitality to the history of the country. Thus Sir James Colquhoun reigns paramount in the district about Luss, as in the days when the bloody feuds between the Colquhouns and McGregors filled its vallies with tumult and slaughter; thus the dependants of the Marquis of Breadalbane shun to speak of the massacre of Glencoe,* as if it were an occurrence of yesterday, and their noble chieftain was in some degree answerable for the conduct of his ancestors: and I felt it strongly on our journey to Stirling; I happened to be reading

* In talking near Kenmore, of this dreadful occurrence, a peasant assured me that the feeling about it was still so strong, that to this day an inhabitant of Glen Lyon would not (to use his own words) "get a night's lodging in Glencoe."

the history of James the Third, not very far from the scene where his death occurred ; as we stopped to change horses, a carriage drove up—W—— accidentally asked who was in the carriage? The post-master said “ Mr. Grant of Keir.” The reply made me start : this singular connexion of the name with what I was reading, threw me back two centuries, and I involuntarily found myself gazing on the man with a sort of endeavour to find any trace which might clear up the suspicions of history.

I do not think we have seen any thing yet, which has pleased me more than some of the views on the Clyde, between Glasgow and Dumbarton. The approach to the latter place is particularly fine. The river Clyde with its forest of ships, the mountain-range on either side, and above all the curiously-shaped detached rock which rises abruptly near the town, and is surmounted by the old castle so celebrated in Scottish history. All these objects, seen by the gleamy light of a showery sunset, were very striking, and put me in mind of some strange

dream, or wild vision of the imagination. "No, not put me in mind," says W—, who has just looked over my scribbled note-book; "say resembled or something else, because that looks as if you had really dreamt of a place like Dumbarton."

Well, and so I have; and I seldom see a beautiful prospect without feeling that I have either dreamt of it or seen some place very like it before. Any thing which enchants me extremely and really comes up to my expectations, produces this effect.

And so I believe it does on many people. It is the same too with every thing that pleases us. If we meet with a person who delights us and enters at once into all our thoughts and feelings, we almost imagine that we must have been acquainted before. And in a manner so we have, for the person or the scene is the realization of our beautiful ideal,—an image or a character which our imagination had formed and dwelt on during many happy hours, but scarcely expected ever to have found.

Carstairs, August.—A month has passed since I opened my note-book, yet we have visited and spent many delightful days on the lakes, climbed several mountains, visited Dunkeld, Blair-Athol, Perth—in short, seen much of what is beautiful in the southern part of Scotland. The only drawback to the very great enjoyment this tour gave me, was that I would not allow myself to write any account of it. Every part of Scotland has been so ably described that I felt it would be ridiculous in me to say any thing about it. The falls of the Clyde I tried to sketch, but threw my drawing in despair into the river, and watched the insignificant speck, as it was hurled along and lost in the foaming abyss. I think them much finer than any I have seen, except Terni. The effect of the Corra fall, seen from the Bonnington side, is I think much finer than the falls of the Rhine at Shaffhausen.

During our journey to-day we read again some of Lockhart's most interesting life of Scott. How true is Scott's observation, "that to feel the desire *far niente* is a sign of the mind's being

at ease!" Besides their own unparalleled merit, one reason why Scott's writings are so universally popular, is that he sketched and studied from all ranks.

It is natural that a man who was never bored by the conversation of the most stupid person, who despised nothing that was "common,"* should, by the result of his observations, please all classes. Those authors who dislike what they consider common-place, and are only interested by observing peculiar and uncommon traits of character, cannot expect their compositions to be admired by the great bulk of mankind; compositions being always the result of those observations which excite the greatest interest in an author's mind.

What struck me as the two peculiar features of the year 1837, was that one never entered a house, no matter what the conditions of its inmates might be, without seeing a volume of

* See his Diary. "Nothing that is really worth having or caring for in this world, is uncommon."—*Vol. vi. p. 61, Lockhart's Life of Scott.*

“Lockhart’s Life of Scott,” and a paper of “Pickwick” on the table.

I think the view which Lockhart has given us of the mind of Scott is likely to do much good. Scott was the more extraordinary from his being so little different from ordinary characters in his every-day life.

It must do incalculable good in these days, to find that a real and first-rate genius, a man who adorned and influenced to such a high degree the literature of his country, was not subject to those infirmities which we are all too much inclined to imagine must belong to a superior genius. What a lesson for all eccentric youths and aspiring young ladies, to see that Scott omitted none of the charities, and was insensible to none of the commonest sympathies of daily life. What an example to all those who imagine that because they can write books their friends and duties may be neglected—that because their minds are a fit match for the most celebrated people of the day, they may very fairly turn up their noses at the conversation of dull or illiterate country neighbours.

In the "Life of Wilberforce," it is said of Scott's novels, "Never scarcely did he lay down these fascinating volumes without repeating his complaint 'that they should have so little moral or religious object. They remind me,' said he, 'of a giant spending his strength in cracking nuts. I would rather go to render up my account at the last day, carrying with me 'The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain,' than bearing the load of all those volumes, full as they are of genius.'" I do not quite agree with Wilberforce in this, but still it is true that there is not any great religious tendency in Scott's writings. This I think is because they are the offspring of a mind, certainly not irreligious, but too innately good to feel the habitual necessity of religion to keep it in order. Some few characters there are, even in this evil world, who seem so well disposed, as scarcely to require the curb of religion. It is difficult for them to comprehend the absolute necessity of being guided in all things by the precepts of the gospel, and therefore they do not see the great importance of instil-

ling these precepts into the minds of others. How beautiful was the natural state of Scott's mind can be seen from numberless passages in his diary. One of them* ends with this observation, "We shall never learn to feel and respect our real calling and destiny, unless we have taught ourselves to consider every thing as moonshine compared with the education of the heart."

It is unfortunate that in the present day, those whose minds are in the most healthy state are not those who write most. Authorship is now the great valve by which evil tempers, bitterness, and all manner of interesting infirmities, are let off. The only advantage which may be derived from these disclosures, is the greater insight they give of that strangest of all mysteries, the heart of man. But on the other hand, I fear much harm is done to those readers who find their own follies and infirmities pictured in all the glowing language which genius and an ardent desire for sympathy can dictate.

* See vol. vi. p. 60.

Who has not felt disposed to excuse their own propensity to be dissatisfied with their fate when reading that beautiful and interesting book, "The Diary of an Ennuyée?" Yes; the diaries and glowing pictures we now have of real and secret feelings, which were formerly either stifled or kept in the back ground, are calculated to make us in love with the frailties as well as perfections of the human mind.

Scott's mind seems to have been one of the healthiest that ever lived and thought. Nothing about him is so remarkable as this. Remarkable, because persons with minds so extremely healthy seldom write much. Perfect health of mind produces a feeling of peace and happiness which needs not have recourse to authorship. The usual impression is that there is something dangerous in genius. In common every-day life it is dreaded and avoided. Why is this? Surely not because genius is in reality a dangerous quality; but because it too often happens that those who write have ill-regulated minds. Many persons possessing genius of the first order pass

through life in quiet happiness, unknown to the world. They are above it; they want neither its smiles nor its praise to assure them that they are among the most gifted of mankind.

"Then you mean to say," I hear M—— exclaim, "that all writers, all the men we are accustomed to venerate as the best of mankind, are in fact less perfect than many unknown characters? Surely Scott himself must upset your theory, to say nothing of Milton, Dante, and many more; was their genius unhealthy?"

No, but then it was called forth by other causes than the common one of a desire for sympathy and applause.

It has been said of Scott, that he wrote without any particular motive, and therefore, perhaps, he was not inspired by the noblest feeling of our nature, a desire to benefit mankind. But to me Scott's character appears more amiable from his *not* having been actuated by a motive. Our natural impulse is to admire the good actions of others, which proceed spontaneously from the heart, more than those which are the

result of effort or calculation. Because, though in fact, not so admirable *as actions*, from being easy, yet they shew that the natural disposition of the person who does them is more perfect. And I am not sure whether this much extolled desire of usefulness be not sometimes a fault—whether it is not caused by pride, and in secret is a gratification of our love for applause. After all what can man—even the best of men, do? This is a melancholy question, and tends to paralyze every spirit of exertion; for employment and the hope of benefiting our fellow creatures, is quite necessary to the existence of some people, and without this hope many of us can do nothing in earnest. Scott's mind seems to have been so happily constituted that he was never tormented by these doubts and misgivings; he was a perfect instrument, that always played in tune.

And do not let us suppose, even though he may not have been consciously actuated by a desire of usefulness, that he did not do much, very much good in his generation. Yes, and to succeeding generations also. There are diver-

sities of gifts ; his was to amuse, and interest, and kindle in the minds of many thousands, perhaps millions, an admiration for the beautiful and good.

CHAPTER IX.

Return to London in the month of November—Gloomy thoughts dispelled by the sight of real happiness—The young Clergyman.

It was in the dreary month of November that we returned home to London, after a foreign tour. There was a thick yellow fog, and the place looked full of sin and suffering.

To return home after a long absence, and see all the memorials of the past, and look again on the pictures of those dear friends now no more, is always to me very melancholy. Portraits are delightful things ; but when we see them after a long absence, and remember that they are all we have remaining—that the loved beings they

represent will never more greet our mortal eyes—the feeling of utter desolation they produce, is sad indeed. It was the first time I had returned since the loss of a beloved parent; and the heavy dull atmosphere through which I gazed on all the objects which were so intimately connected with her image, added to the gloom I felt. The following day there was the same weary fog; everything wore the same melancholy aspect, and I felt that I could never happy again in this world. And yet I had no wish to die, nor have I ever, when miserable: and when I look upon pictures or memorials of departed friends, I actually dread to die—because I know that no one will then be left to value and venerate all these objects, which seem a sort of surviving part of those who are gone. After my death friends may, and I trust will, value anything connected with my memory; but they cannot venerate objects which relate only to those whom they have never seen—little reliques which appear so valueless. A torn, soiled book, a few lines pencilled on an old scrap of paper—some such insignificant objects

as these, are more precious to me than any work of art this world could produce, from the intimate manner in which they are connected with those I have loved so deeply, and the story they tell so vividly of past joys and sorrows.

In the evening we dined with two old friends of W——'s near Belgrave Square. Mr. and Mrs. J—— are people whose sunny countenances seem made on purpose to cheer their fellow-creatures, and inspire them with hope even in the midst of fog and melancholy. The very aspect of their rooms is exhilarating; yet they are small, and furnished without any show or expense. A vine which grows at the back of the house, half conceals the windows with its luxuriant branches; and some fresh flowers in the rooms, are fit emblems of those who reared them. This couple, who have passed through life not without their full share of suffering, nor in a path devoid of temptations, have yet retained a youthful buoyancy of temper, and are now not only happy themselves, but are sure to inspire those who see them with the same feeling. .

The room which I prefer is a small library up stairs. It is so different from any other room I ever saw—evidently that of a person who has sought and found the best way to attain as much real happiness as this world can afford—the dwelling-place of a mind determined to pursue, in the most rational manner, the narrow path that leads to eternal life. Even to look at the titles of the well-read books in this room, always gives me a thrill of delight.

Here, where so many clergymen have received improvement, we sought to obtain it also, by requesting Mr. J— to read the Lord's prayer, with his comments upon it, of which we had heard so much. He replied, that justice could never be done to that divine composition by merely reading; it must be prayed, not read. This he did in the most effective manner; and his remarks upon it gave us quite new ideas on that beautiful prayer. I was particularly struck with his manner of offering up the petition "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us;" the latter part of the sentence being given with that humility of tone

which he explained to us was absolutely necessary to make the sense clearly understood.

There is too, another reason why that house inspires me with happiness. It is because I there was witness to a scene of real joy. The persons concerned were strangers to me, but I knew their history, and I could see by their countenances that they were enjoying that rare moment, which occurs to so few, when a dearest wish, a long-cherished hope, has been fulfilled. Mr. J—— had accomplished this; he was the happy means of saving parents from the misery of blighted hopes, and their beloved child from bitter disappointment and penury. The story is rather interesting, therefore I will try to give an outline of it.

The Renton family possessed formerly a fine old castle and large estates in ——shire, but they gradually lost the greater part of their fortune. The present representative of this ancient family lately lived in a small farm-house in the little village of M—. This humble dwelling is near the church, which contains, and indeed is half filled with, the splendid monu-

ments of this once celebrated race. Helmets, shields, and banners, which were won by the De Rentons in many a battle, still adorn the aisles. Corslets and rusty swords are suspended over the Gothic arches; and some of the windows contain the arms, whose many quarterings are represented in painted glass.

The father of the present representative of the family had indeed possessed the old castle of M—; but with that anxiety to increase his means, which in so many instances has proved unfortunate, and in the hope of regaining a greater portion of the extensive estates and restoring the former splendour of the family, he engaged in a banking speculation, which failed; the entire property was sold in consequence—and thus, at his death, which occurred shortly after, he left his son, who had lately married a beautiful girl, entirely dependant on £1000, which he had received with his wife.

The young couple had been united under the happiest auspices. They were near neighbours, and had long been attached to each other; and at their marriage young Mr. Renton was then

considered one of the best matches in the county. Disappointed expectations and poverty, are sad trials ; but the affections of these two young people endured, even after they were obliged to exchange the princely residence of M—— castle, for a little farm-house, which, with a few acres of land, they had bought with their only remaining thousand pounds. Many of the neighbours thought it strange that they should like to remain so near the family-place which was lost to them for ever; but they were attached to the country, Mr. Renton had not been brought up to any profession, his health was such as to make the idea of embarking in one now, very irksome; and he saw no better or pleasanter way to provide for the support of his family, than to become a farmer, and cultivate the few fields which remained to him of his estates.

M—— castle had been purchased by a wealthy merchant. He was a worthy and good-natured man, who often expressed his regret that the Renton family had been so unfortunate ; and said that if he had not so many children of his own, and a number of poor relations, nothing would

delight him so much as to reinstate the Rentons in their property. Shortly before his death, which occurred about five years after he had made this purchase, the living of M——, worth £700 a year, became vacant, which he gave to a worthy old clergyman, with the understanding, that so soon as Mr. Renton's son should be of age for ordination, he should resign in young Renton's favour, and by his will he left £200 a year for the child's maintenance and his education at college.

This boy was now four years old, and an only child; the parents were, of course, delighted at the prospect thus held out, of his future independence. Their only uneasiness was now removed, for the little farm produced barely sufficient for their support, and they had often looked forward with anxiety to the time when their child's education would require a farther outlay. The delight of the parents may then be imagined, when they saw such a brilliant prospect for their darling boy. Besides, the church was the very profession, of all others, they would have chosen for their son, as they were

very religious, and for the church of M— Mr. Renton had a great veneration, as it contained the monuments of his celebrated ancestors.

The rectory house, too, was a most comfortable, as well as beautiful dwelling. Having been generally occupied by one of the sons or brothers of the possessor of the castle, no expence or trouble had been spared in its embellishment. Its shrubberies and old yew hedges, clipped into quaint forms, were quite in character with the building; then its terraced walks and flower-garden almost rivalled those of the castle; while its situation was even prettier, for the height on which it was placed, commanded a more extensive view over the park, and the river which flowed just at the bottom of the lawn, formed a beautiful feature in the landscape.

During the year which followed, nothing could exceed the happiness of Mr. and Mrs. Renton; but soon afterwards they experienced some anxiety from finding that an impediment in their son's speech, which had shewn itself as soon as he began to speak, became rather worse.

They had consulted the most able physicians, but without success ; and they began to tremble, lest this defect should prove a bar to all his prospects. However, the child was extremely intelligent, and shewed no common genius.

Years passed on, and he distinguished himself at school and at college, in a manner that enchanted his parents, and secured the admiration and esteem of all who knew him. Mr. Renton, who, for himself, was the most unambitious of men, began to indulge in dreams of greatness for his son, and almost expected to see in him the family restored to their ancient splendour. Sometimes, when passing near the monuments of his ancestors in the church, during the dim twilight after evening service, he could scarcely refrain from imagining a bishop's mitre, or even an archbishop's, added to the rest, in the shadowy aisles. And then what fervent thanks did he address to God, for having put into the breast of his benefactor to leave sufficient means for the boy's education.

The hopes and expectations of these fond parents, as their boy advanced in years, went on en-

creasing ; and hard indeed would it be to express their feelings, when the account reached them that he had taken a wrangler's degree. Oh ! how blissful was the meeting after this, and the next six months which were spent by the young Frederic Renton in the old farm-house ! Nothing could be greater than the joy of this family.

Another person, too, had been of late years added to the little circle, who fully shared the common happiness. A young niece of Mrs. Renton's had been left destitute by her parents, and the kind aunt had taken charge of the penniless orphan. She had instructed her in all she knew ; and Frederic had also, during his vacations, bestowed much time in teaching his beautiful cousin. She was about three years younger than himself ; they had loved each other as brother and sister ; but to the surprise of both, a sort of reserve had latterly grown up between them, and though certainly not less glad to meet after the vacation, than formerly, yet they did not testify the same delight.

This was particularly visible in Emily ; and

when the young student came home after his degree, she received him with such apparent coldness, that her aunt could not help observing, when they were alone in the evening, that she did not appear glad to see Frederic. On hearing this, the poor girl burst into tears ; an eclairessement ensued, in which Mrs. Renton discovered, that so far from viewing her son with indifference, the poor girl feared she took too great an interest in him. She then confessed that during the last vacation, Frederic had declared his love ; but that she knew, with his prospects, he ought to aspire to form a higher connection than his poor cousin, and had therefore said she would never consent to be his wife, and in compliance with her earnest request Frederic had promised not to renew the subject till after his ordination.

Mrs. Renton, so far from being sorry that her son had fallen in love with poor Emily, was delighted, and her pleasure was fully shared by her husband. After Frederic, there was no one they loved so well as Emily, and notwith-

standing the ambitious dreams of his future greatness, they foresaw an increase of happiness for their son by his union with his cousin. It was then soon arranged that the young people should marry after Frederic came into possession of his living.

As the time of ordination approached, Frederic devoted much of his time to study—more than his fond parents thought necessary; and even Emily would sometimes playfully interrupt him. On these occasions he appeared annoyed; and as the time drew near his spirits seemed depressed, and he remained nearly all day locked up in his room.

“What can induce Frederic to study so hard?” said Mrs. Renton, repeatedly. “Surely after taking such a high degree, there can be no fear that he will not pass his examination by the bishop. It is quite tiresome—we never see any thing of him.”

Emily said nothing, but she looked anxious and unhappy; for on passing by the window of Frederic's little study, she had seen him sitting with his face covered with his hand, and a large

folio unopened before him. Later in the same day she again passed the window; he was still in the same attitude, and none of the books on the table appeared to have been read.

On the morning of the ordination, Frederic was still more nervous and unhappy. The cause for this apprehension was too soon explained. I said before, that he had a great impediment in his speech, which no one had been able to remove; but so brilliant had been his acquirements, that his fond parents never imagined this could prove a bar to his entering the church.

Frederic himself had never contemplated it as such, till a few weeks previous to his examination, when he heard that a young college friend of his had been refused ordination from the same cause. He would not, however, cloud the joy of his parents before he was sure there was cause for apprehension. His friend was by no means so good a scholar as himself; and he hoped that in favour of his character and acquirements, the impediment in his speech might be overlooked.

The moment came which was to decide his fate for life. As he left the old farm-house, and passed near the gable-ends of the vicarage, he could not avoid gazing on it with intense anxiety. He thought of the blissful lot which awaited him, should he ever become possessor of that house. He saw Emily, his adored Emily, in the old oak parlour; his dear parents comfortably installed in the south wing. He even determined which should be their rooms—already were they furnished with great taste and neatness. Then as he passed the school, he again saw Emily busily occupied in instructing the children; but above all, the church, that edifice which he had been so early taught to venerate—oh! the bliss of entering it as minister, as guardian and instructor of all those poor, with each of whom he was personally acquainted; he knew all their characters; they loved him, too, as the representative of their ancient masters, and every soul in the village looked forward with exultation to the day which was to hail him as their spiritual master.

It falls to the lot of few young men to be so loved, so venerated as was Frederic Renton. The rich and poor, all loved him ; and when he thought of the sore disappointment which every one would experience should he not obtain the living, the tears started to his eyes ; and the old church became obscured, and as he passed near its Saxon entrance he could see nothing but the grave of all his hopes.

Should he be refused ordination, what would become of him, of his parents, of Emily? No means would be left for their support. Emily could never be his. The allowance which Mr. Smith had left for his education had now ceased, and he would be thrown again on his father's slender resources without the prospect of another profession.

All these anxieties were more deeply felt by poor Frederick, from his having kept them quite secret from those he loved. He had determined, as I said before, not to cloud their hopes a moment before there was actual necessity ; but it was the first secret grief he had ever expe-

rienced—all his thoughts had hitherto been shared by his mother or Emily.

But I will no longer dwell on the gloomy thoughts which occupied Frederic, as he rode slowly to the town of E——. I will only say that unfortunately his fears were but too well founded. The Bishop, though most kindly disposed, found it impossible to dispense with the rule which had lately been made, and which was most strictly adhered to, that no one with an impediment of speech could be ordained.

Frederic returned home almost heart-broken; and the joy which that family had so lately experienced, was turned to woe. They were almost stunned by the unexpected misfortune of Frederic, and regretted that he had not sooner told them of his fears. Emily was the only one who seemed to retain the slightest feeling of hope; her high spirits sustained her. She was indignant at the refusal, and repeatedly declared that it was impossible that a young man of Frederic's great talent should find any profession closed against him.

Yet what was to be done? Even if the expense could be borne, the unfortunate impediment would equally prevent his success at the bar. No resource seemed open for him; and even Emily's buoyant spirits soon began to droop.

The heart-broken father ceased to take interest in anything; his farm was neglected, and if it had not been for the kindness of the neighbouring farmers, it would soon have ceased to produce sufficient for their daily maintenance. Soon Mrs. Renton became seriously ill; and a gloom overspread the once happy dwelling.

About this time Emily was summoned to London by a relation of her father, whom she had known from her childhood. He was in declining health, and wished much to see his niece. Emily could not bear the thoughts of quitting her friends; but she felt a sort of hope, that in London she might make such enquiries as would eventually be the means of alleviating Frederic's affliction; for he was so cast down

himself, that he was incapable of any exertion.

The relative to whom she went, lived in the neighbourhood of Belgrave Square ; and it happened that Emily became acquainted with our friend Mr. J——, and discovered that he had made pulpit eloquence and the improvement of speech his particular study. She heard of numerous instances of his success ; and full of hope, at once wrote to Frederic, who lost no time in coming to London, and, to Emily's great joy, placed himself in Mr. J——'s hands.

For a long time no improvement was visible, for Frederic's case was a bad one, and required much time and great attention. Frederic wrote often to his parents, but gave them very faint hopes of his recovery ; but at length Mr. J——'s exertions were successful ; and Frederic became so much better, that he was induced once more to return to the Bishop of E——. This good old man was rejoiced indeed to be now able conscientiously to ordain him.

On the same day Frederic returned home to

the old farm-house, and had the delight of being the bearer of the joyful intelligence to his beloved parents. They hardly knew the sound of his voice, so much was it improved.

Shortly afterwards he was installed in the living, and joyful indeed was the first Sunday on which he performed duty in the old church. Never was sermon so admired—there was scarcely a dry eye in the church; the congregation was like one large family, and the parishioners all lingered in the churchyard, to congratulate their beloved young pastor on his success.

A few weeks afterwards, the same church was the scene of another ceremony scarcely less joyful—Frederic and Emily were united.

I had heard all these details, and fortunately I happened to be at our friend's house, when the bridal pair and the happy parents came to town, on purpose to see the person to whom they were indebted for so much happiness. Frederic and Emily had only been married a month: he is tall and very well looking; and Emily—but

I will not attempt a description ; all I can say is, that whenever I feel inclined to doubt if there be such a thing as real happiness in the world, I try to think of the countenances of these people.

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